

Shin Beth opposes return of refugees

TEL AVIV (AFP) — The Israeli internal security service Shin Beth is opposed to any return of Palestinians to the villages of Irti and Biram in the far north of Israel, which they left in the 1948 Arab-Israeli war, a newspaper reported here Sunday. The independent daily Haaretz said Shin Beth feared the return of the refugees to their homes would set a "dangerous precedent" which could encourage other Palestinians who fled Israel in 1948 to do the same. A ministerial committee chaired by Justice Minister David Libai was due to hear the views of Shin Beth officers on the matter before submitting its recommendations to the government, the newspaper reported. It said residents of 150 Arab villages abandoned in 1948 had demanded the right to return, in a document handed over to the committee. Israeli historians have said Christian villagers from Irti and Biram, near the border with Lebanon, were told by the authorities that they could return home after the war. However, the Israeli army later declared the two villages to be closed military zones, and Israeli governments refused to let the villagers return. Arab and Israeli negotiators have been discussing the refugee question at the multilateral peace talks.

Committee on women meets

AMMAN (Petra) — Her Royal Highness Princess Basma Sunday chaired the first meeting of the National Committee on Women's Affairs and called for a mechanism for the work of the committee. Princess Basma said it was important for her to set up such a committee to benefit from the experiences of its members and ensure their contribution to the implementation of the national strategy for women. The committee will also make the necessary preparations for the fourth international conference on women, due to be held in Peking in 1995.

Saleh warns against coups

SANAA (R) — Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh on Sunday warned against what he called ideological terrorism in Yemen. Mr. Saleh told a meeting of his General People's Congress (GPC) party: "We have to get rid of residues of the mentality of the past and of the totalitarian regime. We should never allow the mentality of plotting, of bloody coups and of ideological and political terrorism to come back anew or dominate our political life." Political sources said Mr. Saleh's comments appeared directed at the Yemen Socialist Party (YSP) and could hinder efforts to end rifts between the two which have paralysed Yemen.

Economic talks in Amman — Peres

DAVOS (AFP) — Participants in the Middle East peace process are to hold an economic conference in Amman aimed at encouraging investment in the region from Europe, Japan and the United States, the Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres said Sunday. "We are planning an economic conference in Amman with business organisations from the United States, Europe and Japan," Mr. Peres said. "We will offer them the chance to participate in the construction of a new Middle East," he said. Jordanian Information Minister Jawad Anani said he hoped the conference would take place this year but he did not give a definite date. Dr. Anani told an audience of participants at the World Economic Forum that the conference would not be aimed at putting together a shopping list for the region but of trying to work together to rebuild the region's economy.

EU delegation visits Damascus

DAMASCUS (AFP) — A European Union (EU) delegation has begun a visit to Damascus to discuss implementation of a \$190 million financial aid package ratified by the European Parliament last month. The delegation led by Eberhard Rhein, European Commission director for the Mediterranean and Middle East, arrived Saturday and would spend four days in Syria before travelling on to Jordan.

Yemeni hostage village cut off

SANAA (AFP) — Tribesmen have cut off supplies to a remote mountain village in northwestern Yemen where three French tourists are being held hostage, sources said here Sunday. Hasbed tribesmen surrounding Al Madan village, 200 kilometres northwest of the capital Sanaa, blocked all access routes to force the surrender of the kidnappers, from the rival Ahnoom tribe.

Israeli health minister announces resignation

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Israeli Health Minister Chaim Ramon said Sunday he would resign in protest at his party's refusal to review Israel's medical insurance system. Mr. Ramon, a member of the Labour Party, told reporters the party had reneged on a promise to set up a national medical insurance scheme.

Arafat, Peres move closer to agreement

DAVOS, Switzerland (Agencies) — Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) Leader Yasser Arafat and Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres Sunday moved tantalisingly close to finalising an agreement on Israeli withdrawal from the occupied territories.

On a day of see-saw hopes, Palestinian and Arab negotiators consistently talked up the prospect of an imminent accord, while the Israeli delegation played it down. The most stubborn problems included the size of the area around the West Bank town of Jericho to come under Palestinian control, and security at border crossings in the Gaza Strip.

"We are on our way to bypass all the obstacles which have been raised in the last weeks... to have very soon, very soon the final agreement," Mr. Arafat told a conference organised by the World Economic Forum, a private Swiss-based organisation.

Egyptian Foreign Minister Amr Musa, who helped mediate the talks, said all that remained to clear up was "finessing some points."

"This really is the final stage," he told journalists. He said he expected a final agreement to be signed in Cairo within 10 days.

Mr. Peres refused to commit himself to a time-frame for concluding the final accord. But he told the conference that "Israel was committed to making a success of the peace process."

While expressing disgust with the ugly and barbarous (assassination), the House reiterates the importance of dealing with our issues through dialogue and democratic means all across the Arab arena," deputies said in a statement.

The lawmakers urged the government to deal firmly with such "crimes that aim at undermining national security," and to guarantee the security of Jordanian diplomats.

The House also called on the Lebanese government to

process. Israel Radio said Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin was studying a compromise proposal worked out in Davos, Switzerland, state radio reported.

The proposal concerned the size of the autonomous Jericho area, the radio said.

It also said Israel had accepted for the first time that corridors would link the Jericho area with three holy places in the Jordan Valley, including Nabi Musa.

Palestinian officials said a written agreement was on the table waiting for approval. Mr. Arafat said he hoped remaining difficulties would be ironed out later Sunday.

Mr. Peres thanked Mr. Arafat "for his supreme effort to bring our two peoples together in the domain of peace and hope."

In a debate that was remarkable for the evident warmth between the two former enemies, Mr. Peres said Mr. Arafat himself "personalises the great suffering of the Palestinian people." Mr. Arafat took Mr. Peres by the hand to lead him up the stairs to the platform and the two men sat next to each other throughout the debate.

"We on our side want to make the Palestinian story a story of success, of good neighbourhood, a story of peace, a story of hope for the coming generations," Mr. Peres said.

A key issue in the negotiations continued to be the size

of the Jericho area to be ceded to the Palestinians under the self-rule plan.

Another stumbling block was control of the border crossings between the new autonomous Palestinian regions in the Gaza Strip and Jordan and, in particular, Egypt.

Israel demands it maintain security on the borders, but the PLO has said the presence of Israeli soldiers would violate the guarantees of autonomy.

The Israeli national news agency Iltan said the weekly cabinet meeting Sunday remained firm on its position on the border checks.

However, Gad Ben-Ari, spokesman for Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, said the cabinet had made no decisions and had not been asked to make any decisions.

There are also detailed administrative arrangements to be sorted out in order to implement the accord signed Sept. 13 in Washington.

The two men were due to hold more late night talks to try to narrow the differences. Mr. Peres was scheduled to leave early Monday for Washington, while Mr. Arafat was expected in the Swiss capital Bern.

"Some things will be finished and some things will remain to be solved," said Israeli Environment Minister Yossi Sarid when asked if the talks would be wound up in Switzerland.

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House condemns diplomat's killing, urges government to deal firmly

By Ayman Al Safadi
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The Lower House of Parliament Sunday condemned as a barbarous crime the assassination of Jordanian diplomat Nayeb Imran Maaytah in Beirut Saturday.

"While expressing disgust with the ugly and barbarous (assassination), the House reiterates the importance of dealing with our issues through dialogue and democratic means all across the Arab arena," deputies said in a statement.

The lawmakers urged the government to deal firmly with such "crimes that aim at undermining national security," and to guarantee the security of Jordanian diplomats.

The House also called on the Lebanese government to

uncover the assassins and refer them to court.

Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali told the House the government had asked the Lebanese authorities to involve Jordan in the investigations into the killing. He said evidence available so far was not sufficient to indicate who was or were behind the assassination. (See separate story)

During the four-and-a-half-hour session, deputies rejected the recommendation of the Judiciary Committee that the House insist on having the minister of transport head the board of directors of Royal Jordanian, the national carrier.

His Majesty King Hussein returned an RJ draft law which was endorsed by the 11th Parliament. The King said the chairmanship of RJ

should be filled by Royal decree.

The King said that having a member of the Cabinet chair the board of RJ does not "meet the requirements of the current era, especially that cabinet portfolios change often, which would reflect negatively on (RJ's) performance."

King Hussein said that a specialised person should head the board of the carrier. A number of deputies argued that the minister of transport should head the RJ's board so that deputies can control the airline's operations.

Deputy Toujan Faisal argued that the RJ chairman should not be a specialised person because his role would be marginal in running

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Bilaterals positive, encouraging — Syria

DAMASCUS (Agencies) — The bilateral Arab-Israeli peace talks in Washington are proceeding in an "encouraging and positive atmosphere," the official Al Thawra daily said here Sunday.

In an editorial, the newspaper said U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher described the negotiations as "very promising," because "he noted how serious the Syrian position was."

The bilateral talks resumed Monday after a four-month break following the signing of the Israel-Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) autonomy accord in September, which Syria condemned, arguing that separate deals undermined the Arab negotiating position.

Settler, 2 soldiers wounded in Gaza

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (Agencies) — A Palestinian on Sunday shot and wounded a Jewish settler less than a day after two soldiers were injured in a grenade attack in the same area of the occupied Gaza Strip, Arab sources said.

The man shot the settler as he was travelling by car near his home in the Morag settlement, causing wounds to the arm that required treatment at the Beersheba hospital in southern Israel, they said.

The army launched a manhunt.

The Islamic Resistance Movement Hamas later said it carried out the attack.

"We hit a Jewish settler, seriously wounding him," Hamas' armed wing Izzeddin Al Qassam said in a statement released in Gaza.

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Late air force chief to be laid to rest today

AMMAN (J.T.) — The body of Jordan's air force chief, Major-General Awni Bilal, who died last week in Washington of a heart attack, was flown home Sunday.

His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, Prime Minister and Defence Minister Abdul Salam Majali, other several royal family members, government leaders and senior Armed Forces officials were at hand to receive the body.

A U.S. Air Force plane brought the body to Marka airport. The funeral is scheduled for Monday.

Gen. Bilal, 55, was in Washington to attend a meeting of a joint Jordanian-American Military Commission.

He served in the Royal Jordan Air Force command for 17 years. Known for his flying skills, he became chief of the command one year ago.

He is survived by his wife and three children.

The body of the late general, wrapped by the Jordanian flag, was taken to the King Hussein Medical Centre. Relatives said the body would be briefly moved to the late general's residence at Tabarbour Monday before it is carried in a funeral procession to the Royal Cemetery.

At the airport, the Regent and the relatives of the deceased major-general received the condolences of the mourners.

In Washington, Jordan's Ambassador to the United States Fayez Tarawneh led a



Air Force officers carry the coffin of their late chief, Major-General Awni Bilal, who died in Washington last week, upon its arrival in Amman Sunday (Petra photo)

group of mourners at dawn Sunday to accompany the body to Andrew air force base where the body was placed on the plane headed for Amman.

His Majesty King Hussein Sunday received a reply letter from Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Abdul Hafez Mirai in reply to the King's letter of condolences over the death of Gen. Bilal.

Also Sunday, Prime Minister Majali received a cable of condolences from Egyptian Minister of Defence Field Marshal Mohammad Hussein Tantawi over the death of Gen. Bilal.

Talhouni passes away

AMMAN (J.T.) — Bahjat Talhouni, a former prime minister and senior statesman, died Sunday noon at the age of 80.

An announcement by the Royal Court said that Mr. Talhouni will be laid to rest in the Royal Cemetery Monday.

Mr. Talhouni, a veteran politician, served as prime minister for the first time in 1960, and within 11 years, he was reappointed as premier six times.

A native of Ma'an, Mr. Talhouni began his career as a judge in the 40's and entered political life as minister of interior and then justice in the early 50's.

Jordanian historians remember him as playing a key role in consolidating inter-Arab relations in the 1960's, serving as His Majesty King Hussein's emissary to the leaders of Arab countries.

Mr. Talhouni formed his first cabinet in 1960 after the assassination of Prime Minister Hazza' Majali. He then held a series of senior posts several times, including that of chief of the Royal Court.

He is survived by his wife and three children.



Bahjat Talhouni

personal representative of the King and speaker of the Senate. Mr. Talhouni served his country until his death, attending his last session as a member of the Senate Saturday.

Speakers of the Upper and Lower Houses of Parliament paid tribute to their senior colleague saying that he was a patriarch of modern Jordan "and one of those true men who shouldered their responsibilities with patriotism behind the Hashemite leadership of His Majesty King Hussein for over 50 years."

Mr. Talhouni was also head of the Jordanian-Soviet Friendship Society.

He is survived by his wife and three children.

Maayteh assailant(s) 'seized documents'

AMMAN (Agencies) — The killer(s) of a senior Jordanian diplomat in Beirut seized documents from his briefcase before fleeing the scene, Jordanian Foreign Ministry officials said here Sunday, citing Lebanese police.

No group claimed responsibility for the murder Saturday of Naeb Imran Maaytah, first secretary at the Jordanian embassy in Lebanon, who was shot four times in the head, neck and chest as he sat in his Mercedes car, according to police and witnesses.

He was killed in the seafont Raouche neighbourhood, which is under Syrian and Lebanese army control.

The Jordanian officials, quoted by AFP, said Lebanese police, who launched a manhunt Sunday, did not give any details about the contents of the documents seized by the assailant(s).

In Beirut, Jordanian Ambassador Fakhri Abu Taleb said: "The murder was planned and carried out by professionals and it could have taken place in any other country."

Mr. Maaytah, a 42-year-old father of three who was posted to Beirut a year ago, was the first Jordanian diplomat killed in the Lebanese capital. A Jordanian charge d'affaires

was kidnapped in Beirut in February 1981 but set free a month later in Syria.

Twenty paramilitary police with M-16 machineguns were deployed outside the Jordanian embassy and the ambassador's residence Sunday.

No group claimed responsibility for the killing, which Jordanian officials say could have been linked to Jordan's participation in the 27-month-old Arab-Israeli peace process.

Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali told parliament on Sunday that he had asked the Lebanese government to inform Jordan of the results of all investigations into the killing.

"We have also asked that a Jordanian team take part in the investigations," Dr. Majali added.

Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik Al Hariri said Lebanon would do its utmost to apprehend the killer(s) of the diplomat.

Mr. Hariri, quoted by a television station he owns, said the killing would not affect relations between Lebanon and Jordan.

"Prime Minister Hariri has stressed that the Lebanese government would use all of its

Maaytah given state funeral in hometown 'Sacrifices strengthen Jordan'

HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, Sunday met with members of training committees at the military training command and the armed forces' colleges and schools.

Prime Hassan said sacrifices offered by Jordan would only strengthen its resolve to carry out its national duty.

"The sacrifices will strengthen our resolve to continue carrying the banner of righteousness higher than anything," the Regent said.

"The sacrifices of these days, from (the assassination of the first secretary at Jordan's embassy in Beirut) Nayeb Maaytah yesterday to the commander of the Royal Air Force, Awni Bilal (who died of a heart attack last week), will always be a reminder for us that God's will is stronger than all of us."

"They can kill us as individuals, but they cannot kill our homeland."



His Royal Highness Prince Abdullah and Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali Sunday offer condolences to the Maaytah family at the funeral of Nayeb Maaytah in Batir near Karak (Petra photo)

Maaytah's funeral in Batir, chanting slogans demanding retribution for the murder, witnesses reported.

"May grief and distress befall the treacherous and cowardly assassins," they shouted during the state funeral.

They were echoing comments by the King himself that "the rats and bats infest

the dark and those behind them in directing these acts be damned and crushed."

In a message he sent to Crown Prince Hassan, from Austria where he is paying a visit, King Hussein said: "Vengeance for our martyr is a task for all of us as one united family against the villains and murderers."

Thousands of people turned up to attend Mr.

New Libyan cabinet signals long standoff with West

SIRTE, Libya (AFP) — Libya has named Abdul Majid Al Qaddafi as head of a new 16-member cabinet, but kept the same foreign minister in a sign it prepared for a long standoff with the West over the Lockerbie bombing.

The General People's Congress (GPC), or parliament, appointed Mr. Qaddafi an engineer and former agriculture minister, as prime minister in the first new government in four years.

Staying on in their key foreign policy posts were Omar Al Muntasser as foreign minister and Jomaa Al Mahdi Al Fezzani as minister of Arab unity.

A Western diplomat said the appointments signalled that Libya would probably stick to its refusal to surrender two suspects accused of blowing up a Pan American airliner over Lockerbie, Scotland in 1988, killing 270 people.

In foreign policy, "it looks like continuity," a Western diplomat in the capital Tripoli said.

Its refusal to hand the men over for trial in Scotland or the United States sparked U.N. sanctions which took effect in April 1992. These include a ban on international flights and trade in weapons, a freeze on assets abroad and a ban on some oil-related equipment.

Parliament named outgoing Prime Minister Abu Zeid Omar Durda as its new deputy speaker. Mr. Durda replaced Mohammad Hijazi who became minister of justice, which had been vacant since Ibrahim Al Bakkar died last year in a car accident.

The armed forces commander, Colonel Abu Bakr Yunes Jaber, a close aide of Libyan leader Colonel Muammar Qaddafi, stayed on as the de facto defence minister — not listed as an official post.

About 1,000 delegates attended the GPC which began last Saturday in Sirte, 400 kilometres northeast of the capital Tripoli.

Government mismanagement and indifference to the needs of the people came under heavy attack during the week-long debates which were carried on Libyan television.

The GPC also discussed the Lockerbie bombing as well as application of Islamic law for thieves and those who defy a ban on alcohol, an official said.

Among other cabinet changes, Sobhi Ben Shatoun replaced Jadhalla Azuz Al Tahi as minister of industry.

Zedine Al Hamsiri became transportation minister, replacing Mubarak Al Shamekh who was named housing minister.

Newcomer Ahmad Ibrahim replaced Information Minister Ali Shaeri who was appointed member of the parliamentary office.

The Ministry of Planning, Commerce and Finance was split into two, with Taber Al Jahimi taking the portfolio of economy and commerce and Mohammad Beit Al Mal remaining minister of planning and finance.

Newcomer Mahmud Bari got the post of minister of general inspection, a legal financial-control authority.

Others retaining their posts were Maritime Resources Minister Mustafa Keaibe, Education and Research Minister Maatouk Mohammad Maatouk, Energy Minister Abdullah Al Badri and Health and Social Security Minister Al Hakihi.

The GPC rejected the resignation of Agrarian Reform Minister Issa Abdul Kafi Al Sid.

Parliamentary Speaker Zanati Mohammad Zanati retained his post.

Libya's ambassador to France, Saad Mustapha, became the parliament's foreign affairs secretary and Mahmoud Al Hiki was named secretary of popular committees (ministries) affairs.



DEFIANT SETTLERS: Handcuffed Jewish settlers were arrested late Saturday as they tried to set up an "illegal" settlement in the West Bank occupied Jerusalem Sunday. About 20 settlers (AFP photo)

Libya urges Maghreb to stop sanctions

SIRTE, Libya (AFP) — Libya's parliament Sunday urged other members of the Arab Maghreb Union (AMU) to stop implementing U.N. sanctions slapped on Libya, four days ahead of an AMU summit in Tunis.

"We ask the AMU countries to stop implementing the embargo," said a statement issued by the General People's Congress (GPC), or parliament, after a week-long session in Sirte, 400 kilometres northeast of the capital Tripoli.

Besides Libya, the AMU groups Morocco, Algeria, Mauritania and Tunisia.

The GPC has decided "to strive for a united Arab position against the embargo and to review its ties with each country relative to its attitude regarding the unjust sanctions."

The GPC also called on the United Nations Security Council to intervene to bring to trial the U.S. officials responsible for the 1986 American raid against Tripoli and Benghazi.

Sunday's statement also said the GPC "rejected the Gaza-Jericho (limited autonomy) accord" signed by Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) on Sept. 13 in Washington and called on the Palestinian people to "hold on to their right to free their land and establish a democratic state in Palestine."

Palestinian elections test support for self-rule

GAZA (R) — Supporters and opponents of the Palestine Liberation Organisation's (PLO) peace deal with Israel have tied for control of Gaza Engineer's Association in the latest test of political strength between the two sides.

Since the PLO and Israel signed their agreement four months ago, Palestinians have seen each election for institutions such as professional or student unions, fought between lists from rival political factions, as an opinion poll on the deal.

Results announced on Friday night showed the Palestinian Engineers Bloc, allied to the main PLO group Fateh, lost outright control of the association's committee and will share power with a rival block of Muslim fundamentalists.

The Fateh-allied list, which held five of the nine seats on the outgoing committee, won four seats as did the United Islamic Scientific List. The two sides agreed to rotate control of the ninth seat.

The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine and the Arab Liberation Front also put forward lists in the election in which 87 per cent of qualified engineers voted.

"We've tried to make the elections on professional issues and as far away from politics as possible, but there's no doubt that with politics so hot in Gaza right now, there is political significance," said Hamed Abu Shaban, an unsuccessful candidate on the Fateh list.

The Islamic coalition put out a glossy manifesto introducing each of its candidates and laying out plans to boost social and health services provided by the association.

But candidate Rafik Mekki admitted the election was as much about national politics as professional matters: "It is natural in the critical time we live in that politics play a role."

Palestinians also see institutional elections as a measure for voting trends across the occupied territories for a Palestinian self-rule authority, due later this year.

Since September's peace deal, Islamists have also displaced Fateh supporters from the Gaza Accountants Association and won overwhelmingly in union elections at the Islamic University.

An alliance of Muslim fundamentalists and headline secular factions beat PLO supporters in student elections at Bir Zeit University in the West Bank, traditionally a bastion of Palestinian nationalism.

Fateh, who only a few years ago controlled nearly every Palestinian institution, in other elections have kept control of a United Nations training centre in Kalanidia refugee camp, a technical college in Nablus and the West Bank Doctors' Union.

The engineer's association verifies professional documentation for its members and sets professional standards. It also has a social fund and health service.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Iraq near pre-war strength — magazine

WASHINGTON (R) — Iraq's military has regained much of its pre-Gulf war strength. U.S. News and World Report magazine reported Saturday. The magazine, citing intelligence sources in London, said in its latest edition that while the Iraqi army was only half as large as it was before being defeated by a U.S.-led coalition in 1991, it has regained 80 per cent of its pre-war fire power. It said that while Iraq before the war had about 5,500 tanks, more than half of those were obsolete Soviet-built T-54s and T-59s. The country now has about 2,500 tanks but most of them are modern T-72 Soviet-built ones. The Iraqi air force, which suffered heavy losses, is now flying an estimated 400 combat-ready aircraft, the magazine said. Many Iraqi jets were flown to Iran to escape the conflict. Baghdad is still trying to get back many of them. The report said Iraq had rebuilt its defence industry to 200 factories.

Group demands release of TV reporters

ANKARA (AP) — A Turkish human rights group on Saturday appealed to separatist Kurdish rebels to release two reporters abducted earlier this week. The independent Human Rights Association said there was no justification to the kidnappings. Kurdish guerrillas abducted Kutlu Esender and Recep Ozturk while they were on an assignment for a Muslim fundamentalist television station in southeastern Turkey on Wednesday. The guerrillas in November barred reporters from travelling to the Kurdish-dominated region, threatening violators with death after alleging their coverage was pro-government. "Journalists cannot be barred from functioning even under war conditions," the group said. Fourteen journalists have been killed in southeastern Turkey over the past two years. The guerrillas of the Kurdistan Labour Party have been fighting for autonomy in the region since 1984. The clashes with government forces have killed about 10,000 people.

Israeli novelist and poet dies

TEL AVIV (AP) — Israeli novelist and poet Pinchas Sadeh died of cancer on Saturday, Israel Radio reported. He was 64. The Polish-born Sadeh immigrated to Palestine in 1934, and his early poetry expressed the Zionist ideals of those years. In the 1960s, he turned inward and his work became more personal. Among Sadeh's works were the poetry collections "Burden of Dumah" and "Life as a Parable," as well as the novels "One Man's condition" and "Death of Avimelech." Sadeh died at Jerusalem's Haddassah hospital, the radio said. Funeral arrangements were not complete.

Two held for kidnapping Algerian Islamist

ALGIERS (R) — Two men suspected of involvement in the November kidnapping of a moderate Algerian Islamist later found with his throat slit have been arrested, the state news agency APs said Saturday. Mohammad Bousslimani, a founder of the moderate Islamist party Hamas, was kidnapped on Nov. 26 by four gunmen from his home in Blida 50 kilometres south of Algiers. Algerian television reported on Friday that Mr. Bousslimani had been found with his throat slit in a mountainous region near the town of Al Affroun about 50 kilometres southwest of Algiers. APs, quoting security service sources, named the suspects as Nacer Guitoun, an agronomist, an Zerani Rachid, a civil servant and local religious leader.

Ex-Bank Leumi chief returns for trial in Israel

TEL AVIV (R) — Ernst Japhet, the former chairman of Bank Leumi wanted in connection with a banking scandal that cost the government more than \$9 billion, has returned to Israel for trial. "It is always good to come back to Israel," he said on Friday at Tel Aviv Airport. Mr. Japhet, 72, returned from the United States after the Justice Ministry said it had cancelled an extradition request and promised he would not be arrested. Mr. Japhet and other top commercial bankers in Israel were implicated by a state inquiry into the manipulation of bank share prices which collapsed in 1983. The government bailed out shareholders and paid more than \$9 billion for bank assets worth far less after the collapse of shares that had been widely regarded as a non-risk investment. Mr. Japhet quit Bank Leumi in 1986 and left for New York soon afterwards with a \$4.5 million retirement package from the bank. The "golden handshake" caused a public uproar, forcing the bank to cut his monthly pension from \$28,000 to \$13,000. Many Israelis lost their life savings in the collapse. A verdict is expected on Feb. 16 in the trial of the other commercial bankers charged with manipulating the share prices. No date has been set for the opening of Mr. Japhet's trial.

California man denied default judgment

FRESNO, California (AP) — An exiled Iraqi who produces political broadcasts in California has lost a legal battle involving what he says was a plot by the Iraqi government to murder him. Sargon Dadesho, who has lived in the United States since 1965, had filed a \$22.6 million lawsuit against his former government, but it was ignored. He then applied in Fresno's U.S. District Court for a default judgment. That was denied earlier this month by Judge Robert Coyle who ruled there was not enough evidence to prove that Iraq broke racketeering laws, conspired to deprive Mr. Dadesho of his rights or plotted to kill him. Another court previously agreed there was a plot against Mr. Dadesho. In August 1992, Andri Khoshaba of Modesto, California, was sentenced to five years in prison for contracting with an Iraqi agent to kill Mr. Dadesho for \$50,000. Mr. Dadesho has until early March to present evidence to the court that the Iraqi government was behind the plot. Mr. Dadesho thinks he was targeted because he makes radio and television shows that criticise Iraqi President Saddam Hussein.

Iran struggles with reform

TEHRAN (AFP) — Fifteen years after Iran's Islamic revolution, businessmen drive brand-new Mercedes, advertising billboards abound, and newspapers publish stock quotations.

And workers demonstrate against rising prices as well as unemployment, corruption spreads, and hardliners denounce the abandonment of revolutionary ideals.

When the Islamic revolution triumphed on Feb. 1, 1979 in the name of the have-nots, it made austerity a virtue and nationalised entire sectors of the economy.

A decade and a half later, Iran has reversed course and headed towards a market economy, a process which has plunged the government into an unprecedented crisis and hit the poor severely.

The liberalisation drive was launched by President Ali Akbar Rafsanjani, just one year after the revolution's charismatic leader, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, died in 1989.

Hoping to revive an economy disrupted first by the

revolution and then by the 1980-1988 war with Iraq, Mr. Rafsanjani steadily removed subsidies, started monetary reform, and backed privatisation of industry and services.

He allowed foreign products back into Iran and urged wealthy Iranians who had fled abroad during the revolution to return home.

Liberalisation filled stores with goods, plunged the country into a spending spree after decade of society, and brought new life into the Tehran bazaar, the economy's traditional driving force.

It also led to new fortunes for those who invested in real estate.

Tehran's relationship with Washington is a symbol of its current pragmatism.

While the leadership and the press continue to label Washington as the "great Satan" and the revolution's foremost enemy, the United States in the past few years has become one of Iran's main trading partners.

But this "second revolution" is going through increasingly hard times as the government

fails to control it properly and some politicians and religious figures slow it down for fear of its social consequences.

The return to a market economy and a sharp depreciation of the rial have produced runaway inflation and impoverished much of the population who can no longer afford many items.

Corruption, which had disappeared in the first few years after the revolution, has returned at an alarming pace.

Uncontrolled imports combined with falling oil revenues have placed Iran on the brink of bankruptcy.

According to Western sources, Iran for the first time in its history is unable to reimburse its debts, and has accumulated \$13 billion in arrears in 18 months. The figure amounts to one year of oil revenue.

The austerity policy Iran has adopted to overcome the financial crisis has led to a steep fall in imports over the past year but at the same time sparked a crisis for industry which depends heavily on imported equipment.

Theft of food aid plunges Somalia force into controversy

MOGADISHU (AFP) — The theft of 327 tonnes of food from a World Food Programme (WFP) warehouse at Belet Huen in western Somalia has ignited a controversy over the attitude of U.N. troops accused of refusing to protect aid workers afraid for their safety.

The incident has also embarrassed aid organisations only a few days before a new conference on humanitarian aid for Somalia due to be held this week in Nairobi.

WFP workers have suspended operations at Belet Huen since the theft and the WFP head of logistics in Mogadishu, Ulf Schmid, said they would not be resumed "until the stolen food is returned to us."

He said the WFP had suffered a similar theft at Berbera in the northern Somali region and had reacted

similarly. "We demanded the same thing and it worked," he said.

For the time being the local coordinator of WFP in Belet Huen has left to return to Mogadishu.

The British Save the Children Fund (SCF) has likewise halted all its operations in Belet Huen and its two staff have temporarily left for Nairobi.

A half dozen other people working for non-governmental organisations (NGOs), most of them local ones, have placed themselves under the protection of U.N. German soldiers.

A large man-hunt has been launched to find those responsible for stealing the WFP food valued at some \$85,000. But Mr. Schmid said it was widely rumoured that local Governor Hassan Qalad had master-minded the theft

which was carried out by a well-organised gang equipped with guns and trucks.

On Tuesday, the day before the food was stolen, Mr. Qalad told the WFP to hire private security guards in place of the Somali policemen protecting the warehouse.

The WFP refused and the following night the food was seized under the nose of the police who said they had been unable to do anything because the thieves were too numerous. Next morning, the food was being sold on local markets.

The incident heightened tension between rival local clans as rumours spread that the SCF base was next on the thieves' list.

Frightened SCF workers appealed to Italian soldiers based in Belet Huen for protection and help in leaving the town.

However, SCF said Italians refused to help saying they were in Belet Huen to protect the German soldiers who are banned on constitutional grounds from fighting on foreign soil outside the NATO theatre.

In this respect the situation in Belet Huen is unique in Somalia, a spokesman for the U.N. force in Somalia (UNOSOM) said Saturday.

Like the Americans, French or Belgians, the Germans and Italians have decided to withdraw from Somalia by March 31 and are gradually reducing the size of their contingents.

There are still about 1,300 German soldiers in Belet Huen whereas the number of Italian troops has been reduced from 500 last year to

150.

The Italians' mission has been similarly cut back and pending their replacement by 170 Malaysian soldiers their task effectively comes down to protecting the Germans.

"We knew this and this is why we didn't ask them for anything," said Mr. Schmid.

However, Richard Burge, who heads the SCF programme in Mogadishu, was more forthright: "I am very angry with the Italians... they have refused assistance to NGOs. Men on the ground refused to offer their support."

He added: "I find their attitude, their lack of humanitarian sense beyond belief... they should go home, they are only confusing the issue."

UNOSOM civilian and military spokesmen said its services had received no re-

quest for assistance from the SCF.

Major David Stockwell admitted, however, that even with the best will, a handful of soldiers could not undertake the task of a whole army.

The problem has already arisen at buala in the south where security has deteriorated so much since the departure of U.N. troops that humanitarian organisations have evacuated all foreign workers.

In Mogadishu on Wednesday, the French International Action Against Hunger organisation accused UNOSOM troops of failing to respond to requests for assistance.

The organisation said foreign soldiers were now more concerned with their own safety than with protecting NGOs or pursuing bandits.

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JORDAN TELEVISION	
Tel: 77311-19	
PROGRAMME TWO	
17:30	Le Monde Sous Marin
18:30	Magazine Local
19:00	News in French
19:15	The weekly sport magazine
19:30	News in Hebrew
20:00	News in Arabic
20:30	The Turkishes
21:00	Thirtysomething
22:00	News in English
22:30	Feature Film: "Night Nurse"
PRAYER TIMES	
05:07	Fajr
06:27	(Sunrise) Dhuha
11:49	Dhuhr
14:46	'Asr
17:11	Maghreb
18:30	Isha
CHURCHES	
St. Mary of Nazareth Church Swedieh, Tel. 810740	
Assemblies of God Church, Tel. 632785	
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590	
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440	
De la Salle Church Tel. 661757	
Terrence Church Tel. 622366	
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 623541	
Anglican Church Tel. 630851, Tel. 628543	
Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331	
Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 775261	
St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751	
Armenian International Church Tel. 625256	
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 824328	
German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 664195	
The Latter-Day Saints Tel. 654932	
Church of Nazareth Tel. 675491	
The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 811295	
WEATHER	
Bulfinch supplied by the Department of Meteorology.	
Rain will fall in all parts of Kingdom with clouds becoming westerly active and clouds building up. Temperatures will drop with snow expected to fall over hilly areas. In Aqaba, it will be partly cloudy with a chance of showers. Winds will be southerly active and seas rough.	
Min./Max. temp.	4 / 10
Aqaba	9 / 18
Deserts	3 / 12

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

Jordan Valley 10 / 17	
Yesterday's high temperatures: Amman 14, Aqaba 22. Humidity readings: Amman 40 per cent, Aqaba 40 per cent.	
USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS	
NIGHT DUTY	
AMMAN:	
Dr. Ghaleb Zawaideh	736011
Dr. Abdul Qader Al Lala	756046
Dr. Ahmad Othman	786384
Dr. Mahmoud Amer	898983
First pharmacy	661912
Fordows pharmacy	783336
Al Asoma pharmacy	637055
Nairookh pharmacy	623672
Al Salam pharmacy	636730
Yacoub pharmacy	644945
Souciyani pharmacy	637650
Nairookh pharmacy	623672
Najib pharmacy	647632
DEBID:	
Dr. Mohammed Al Hila	279773
Liquids pharmacy	(-)
ZARQA:	
Dr. Rajah Sagr	901290
Khalifah pharmacy	985417
EMERGENCIES	
Food Control Centre	637111
Civil Defence Department	661111
Rescue	630341
Civil Defence Emergency	109
Rescue Police	192, 82111, 637777
Fire Brigade	891228
Blood Bank	775121
Highway Police	643402
Traffic Police	896390
Public Security Department	63021
Hotel Complaints	605800
Price Complaints	661176
Water and Sewerage	
Complaints	897467
Amman Municipality	
Complaints	787111
Telephone Information	
(directory assistance)	121
Overseas Calls	010230
Central Amman Telephone	
Repairs	623101
Abdali Telephone Repairs	661101
Jordan Television	773111
Radio Jordan	774111
Water Authority	680100
Jordan Electricity Authority	815615
Electric Power	
Company	636381
RJ Flight Information	08-53200
Queen Alia Int. Airport	08-53200
Al Hikma Modern Hospital	(09)999990
DEBID:	
Princess Baena Hospital	(02)755555
Greek Catholic Hospital	(02)722775
Don Al Naloca Hospital	(02)247100
AQABA:	
Princess Haya Hospital	(03)314111
HOSPITALS	
AMMAN:	
Hussein Medical Centre	813813/32
Khalidi Maternity, J. Amn.	644281/6
Akileh Maternity, J. Amn.	642441/2
Jabal Amman Maternity	640362
Mallat, J. Amman	631480
Patience, Shmiciani	664171/4
Shmeisani Hospital	669131
Al-Mustashir Hospital	845845
The Islamic, Abdali	664175/7
Al-Ahli, Abdali	664164/4
Al-Bashir, J. Ashrafieh	77101/3
Al-Bashir, J. Ashrafieh	77511/26
Queen Alia Hospital	891611/15
Amal Hospital	602240/50
674155	
ZARQA:	
Zarqa Govt. Hospital	(09)883323
Zarqa National Hospital	(09)905560
Don Sina Hospital	(09)986732
FOR THE TRAVELLER	
QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT	
This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) Information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (08)53200-5, where it should always be verified.	
ARRIVALS	
Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)	
07:10	Sanna (RJ)
08:30	Jeddah (RJ)
08:30	Damascus (RJ)
09:30	Riyadh (RJ)
09:55	Dubai, Abu Dhabi (RJ)
10:00	Beirut (RJ)
11:45	New Delhi (RJ)
16:45	New York, Amsterdam (RJ)
16:55	Cairo (RJ)
18:45	Bangkok (RJ)
19:00	Casablanca, Tunis (RJ)
Other Flights (Terminal 2)	
09:35	Cairo (MS)
10:00	Khartoum (SD)
12:25	Muscat, Abu Dhabi (GP)
18:45	Dubai (EM)
01:15	Amsterdam (KL)
DEPARTURES	
Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)	
06:00	Beirut (RJ)
11:00	Amsterdam, Chicago (RJ)
12:30	Frankfurt, London (RJ)
12:45	Cairo (RJ)
20:00	Dhahran (RJ)
20:15	Bahrain, Doha (RJ)
20:30	Dubai, Karachi (RJ)
20:45	Damascus (RJ)
21:30	Abu Dhabi Muscat (RJ)
Other Flights (Terminal 2)	
06:00	Istanbul (TA)
08:15	Beirut (ME)
10:00	Cairo (MS)
11:00	Khartoum (SD)
12:30	Bahrain, Abu Dhabi (GP)
19:45	Dubai (KL)
02:15	Amsterdam (KL)
MARKET PRICES	
Upper/lower price in ffs per kg.	
Apple	720/450
Banana (Mukammur)	600
Cabbage	60 / 30
Carrot	170/100
Cauliflower	90 / 50
Clementine	260 / 200
Cucumbers (large)	110 / 60
Cucumbers (small)	250 / 180
Eggplant	100 / 60
Garlic	200/120
Grape Fruit	700 / 500
Green beans	160 / 100
Lemon	140 / 90
Marrow (large)	240 / 180
Marrow (small)	200/300
Olives (green)	350 / 300
Onion (dry)	200 / 140
Onion (wet)	200 / 140
Pepper (sweet)	260 / 200
Pepper (hot)	240 / 180
Potato	100 / 80
Radish	130 / 70
Spinach	600 / 500
String beans	600 / 500



ATTENTION TO ART: Her Royal Highness Princess Haya Sunday visited the Royal Cultural Centre (RCC) and is briefed on the centre activities, especially the RCC Ballet Group which is rehearsing to present a full performance of Swan Lake.

Report faults decision makers, bureaucracy for extensive agricultural research problems

By Ian Atalla

Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — A report to the second and last day of a seminar designed to prepare a national agricultural research strategy criticised government decision makers, management and bureaucracy for problems faced in this sector.

The report, presented by Aowar Batikhi of the National Centre for Agricultural Research and Technology Transfer (NCARTT), concluded that agricultural research in

Jordan at present faced extensive problems in the areas of management and personnel. In addition to the problems of lack of coherence, intercommunication and coordination in agricultural research management departments, Dr. Batikhi cited lack of care among government decision makers for the value of agricultural research, a cramped bureaucracy and low pay and poor incentives for researchers and research assistants.

He said such factors lead to low morale and enthusiasm,

adding that many researchers face poor living conditions and transportation facilities in remote areas of Jordan, as well as a lack of trust towards researchers and assistants from local farmers in those areas.

The report concluded that extensive work was needed to improve factors affecting agricultural research on all fronts, including increased funding for research equipment and better incentives for research workers.

NCARTT Director General Mahmoud Duwairi told the

Jordan Times that "we have our research stations, we have our good facilities, and I think they are the best in the Middle East region. But at this time we do not have all the human resources available."

An improvement which he expected to take place was the establishment of a new national information centre and library for agricultural research at NCARTT within the next few months. He said the centre would be open to all agricultural students, professors, and researchers.

The importance of the library, he said, was that it would improve the current deficiency of dependable information resources and files for agricultural specialists in Jordan.

He added that in its upcoming research efforts, NCARTT would be "emphasising the water aspect of agriculture. We have set up a new programme for water and irrigation management and hope to be working in close coordination with the Ministry of Water and Irrigation."

More engineers find jobs — JEA

AMMAN (Petra) — Increasing numbers of engineers are finding jobs, and the unemployment rate among them now stands 3.5 per cent, according to Jordan Engineers Association (JEA) Training and Employment Department Director Hisham Khreisat.

Mr. Khreisat attributed the job increase to the boom in the construction and industrial sectors.

In a statement Sunday, Mr. Khreisat said that strenuous efforts on the part of JEA, in cooperation with government and private organisations, have also been instrumental in reducing the rate of unemployment among the estimated 32,500 Jordanian engineers over the past two years.

The JEA has provided training for engineers and has secured employment for at least 700 of its members in the past year, he said.

In 1994, the association plans to arrange training for 500 engineers and find jobs for as many through programmes it has prepared in cooperation with the private sector and the Ministry of Public Works and Housing, Mr. Khreisat announced.

He added that the JEA has agreed with the Vocational Training Corporation (VTC) to arrange a one-year training course for engineers at industrial and contracting companies, as well as at engineering and commercial firms that have been cooperating with the

VTC for a long period, said Mr. Khreisat.

He said that a JD 120 month salary is paid to engineers in training, adding that most of these trainees find jobs afterwards.

According to Mr. Khreisat, other newly-graduated engineers are given training courses with the Jordanian Armed Forces and the Royal Scientific Society (RSS), noting that last year, 40 engineers benefited from such courses and 80 others were expected to benefit from the 1994 courses. He said that the Ministry of Public Works and Housing last year offered training programmes to 130 engineers, and it is hoped that the ministry will increase the number this year.

Ministry approves imports of saplings

AMMAN (Petra) — The Ministry of Agriculture Sunday approved the importing of fruit saplings by private nursery owners.

A ministry statement said that farmers may obtain licences to import a limited number of fruit trees, which are in short supply in Jordan, for the sole purpose of commercial cultivation on their own farms.

It said that Minister of Agriculture Mohammad Mahdi Farhan has instructed ministry inspectors to tour the farms in question and ensure that their owners abide by the regulations, adding that violators would be subject to fines.

According to the ministry

statement, Jordan produces four million fruit trees at its nurseries, of which three million are for local planting and the balance are slated for export.

But the ministry noted that while nurseries produce sufficient olive and citrus fruit saplings, the country is still lacking in apple trees and grape vines.

In June last year, the ministry allowed nursery owners to import apple saplings and rare strains such as avocado, pistachio loquats and palm tree saplings.

The statement said that the ministry would provide supervision and technical help to nurseries in cultivation and production of fruit trees.

Police search for robbers posing as uniformed officers

By Rana Hussein

Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Police are searching for people who impersonated military officials recently, and robbed several citizens in different parts of the Kingdom, according to police reports.

Four people were robbed by impostors who, according to police reports, first posed as officials to 70-year-old shepherd.

The shepherd, who was identified as A.A.A., told police he was tending his sheep when two people approached him, one wearing an official uniform, and told him they were investigating a crime in the area.

He added that the two men asked him if he was carrying any weapon, then they asked to search him.

The shepherd said that when the two men left, he checked for his wallet and discovered it was missing. He said his wallet contained JD 120.

The man told police the impostors were driving a white car, and he had no further details about them, the police report said.

On Sunday three more people fell victim to two men, claiming they were officials. A 27-year-old reported to police that two people stopped

him while he was walking. R.Y.M. told police the two (one wearing an official uniform) stopped him and demanded to search him. After they finished, he said, they asked him to head to a nearby police station for further investigations and disappeared. The victim told police he checked his wallet and found that his money was missing.

He told police the two were driving a blue car. No further details were available.

In another incident, a 67-year-old man reported to police that two men, claiming they were military officials and driving a black car approached him on a farm road while he was walking.

One of the men was wearing a military uniform, according to the victim.

He said the two men asked to search him and when they left, his money was missing from his person.

The same evening, another man, identified as S.H.S., reported to police a similar incident. He said two men masqueraded as officials and demanded to search him. Fortunately, the man said, he was carrying no money.

Police reports, however, did not try to link the four incidents, gave no personal details of the suspects and made no mention of the areas in the Kingdom where the suspects were thought to be operating.

A Public Security Department (PSD) official said the department urges the public to notify police of any suspicious persons who demand to search them without a motive.

Austrian cellist, pianist to perform

By Jean-Claude Elias
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Joining the French, the American, the British and the German in presenting fine classical music concerts in Jordan, the Austrian embassy, in cooperation with the National Music Conservatory — Noor Al Hussein Foundation, has invited two exceptional musicians to perform at the Royal Cultural Centre in Amman tonight (Monday).

Florian Kitt on cello and Rita Medjimorec on piano will play works by Robert Schumann (Fantasy Pieces), Zoltan Kodaly (a sonata), Richard Strauss (a sonata) and Bohuslav Martinu (Variations on a Theme by Rossini).

The recital by Kitt and Medjimorec is meant to be first in a series that will bring more talented Austrian performers to the country.

Larger classical ensembles from Austria are planning to visit Jordan in the near future.

Kitt and Medjimorec studied music in famous institutions like the Vienna Academy of Music and the Mozarteum.

More important however than their impressive academic background are the highly flattering critiques they have received from the international press such as the Daily Telegraph of London, Die Presse of Vienna and the Times of London. "Before all, Florian Kitt is an intelligent musician," "The interpretation was masterful."

Flood stranded family receives aid

AMMAN (Petra) — The Ministry of Social Development Sunday provided cash and in kind assistance to a seven-member family that became homeless last Sunday when heavy rains flooded their houses in the Wadi Haddadeh area.

Ministry Secretary General Suleiman Al Rousan Sunday

visited the family and handed them the emergency assistance.

The family's house is located alongside Wadi Haddadeh stream, under street level.

Amman Municipality workshops were constructing a culvert on the stream, but were forced to stop work because of the rainfall.

WHAT'S GOING ON

EXHIBITIONS

- ★ Plastic art exhibition by artist Shaker Abu Ghazaleh at the Phoenix Gallery for Culture and Art.
- ★ Art exhibition by Syrian artist Yasser Hammond at Baladna Art Gallery (Wasfi Al Tal Street).
- ★ Exhibition by Lebanese artist Hussein Madi at Darat Al Funun of the Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation. Also showing the "permanent" exhibition of 54 Arab contemporary artists. (Tel. 643251/2)
- ★ Exhibition on the art of architecture at the French Cultural Centre.
- ★ Art exhibition by Suha Noursi entitled "Landscapes" at the Elmad Jordan Inter-Continental Gallery (8:00 a.m.-7:00 p.m.).

FILMS

- ★ Film entitled "Pekin" at the French Cultural Centre at 8:00 p.m.
- ★ Long film entitled "Le Testament Du Docteur Cordelier" at the French Cultural Centre at 8:00 p.m.

- ★ Film in Arabic entitled "The Land of Dreams" at the Phoenix Gallery for Culture and Art at 6:00 p.m.

CONCERT & DRAMA

- ★ Concert at the Royal Cultural Centre at 8:00 p.m.
- ★ Drama in Arabic entitled "The Question" at the Royal Cultural Centre (11:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m.).

LECTURES

- ★ Lecture entitled "The Negotiations With the Israelis: Where Did It Get To And What Are The Prospects?" by Palestinian ambassador in Cairo Sa'id Kanat at Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation in Jabal Amman at 6:00 p.m.
- ★ Lecture by Ms. Nelly Lama entitled "Japanese Cultural Nature Worship" with slides show at the Young Women's Christian Association" on Tuesday (1 February) at 10:00 a.m.

SUPERBOWL

- ★ Superbowl match between the Buffalo Bills and the National Football League to be screened at the American Center at 4:00 p.m.

Noor Al Hussein Foundation The Jubilee School Teachers Needed

Noor Al Hussein Foundation announces the Jubilee School's need for male/female teachers in the following fields: Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry, Biology, Arabic, English, Computer, Social Studies, Electronics, Counseling, and Physical Education.

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2. Tawjihi with an average of 80 or above.
3. Willing to work on a full-time basis.
4. A good command of spoken and written English.
5. To be knowledgeable, and have various interests and skills.

The foundation will provide training programmes to those selected in the field of gifted education, and will offer rewarding salaries according to qualifications and experiences.

Those meeting the above-mentioned requirements should contact Noor Al Hussein Foundation in order to fill out application forms, and submit all necessary papers.

For more information, please call:

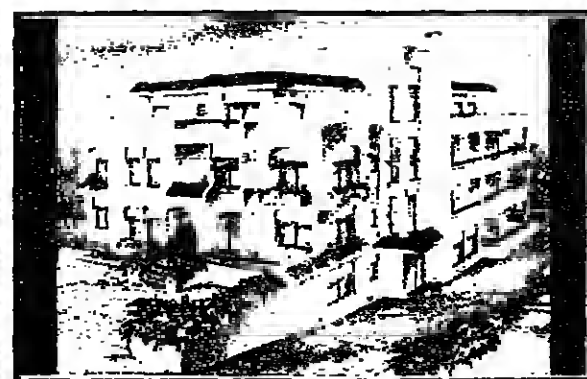
Mrs. Laila Al Saket
Mrs. Eman Malhas

Tel. 606992/3/4
Tel. 827150

N.B.:

- Vacancies for counseling and physical education are restricted to males only.
- Application forms should be submitted no later than Feb. 28, 1994.

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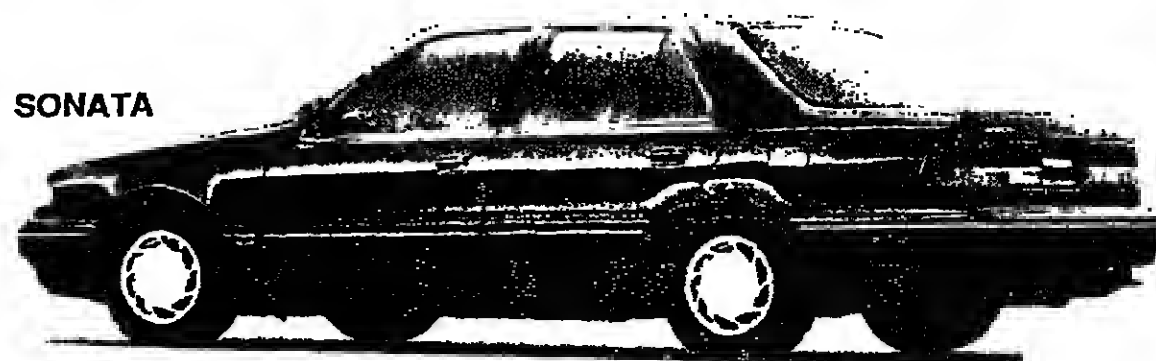
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Political ethics, public office and the media

By Izzat R. Dajani

Never before in Jordan's contemporary history had a member of the Cabinet caused as much sensation, confusion, anger and fear as the most recent revelations by the minister of health which were truly controversial in the sense that he provided the media with a provocative story that certainly made news.

The minister of health accused traders and major importers of being members of a food and drug "mafia" where vast profits were made through supplying the public with inferior quality products or even harmful ones. He portrayed himself as someone who cared but was left helpless by the powerful forces controlling food and medicines in Jordan. He presented a strong appeal to the public and asked for help. This is ironic though since the minister is the highest executive public official for health.

In this context, I have no wish or desire to indulge in the argument of "good or harmful food," or efficacious or less efficacious medicine. Such matters cannot be argued lightly. This must be subject to the very technical nature of the problem which requires laboratory test analysis and professional opinion. However, I see a compelling need to argue and discuss the methods and means through which accusations were made. This unconventional approach witnessed a most senior public official going to the media in a fight against his own ministry, many of its staff members and the general body of the trading and industrial community. Such an approach carried a great appeal among the public but it also carried an even greater level of anxiety and confusion. It is non-conforming, provocative and very different.

The Ministry of Health is one of the important ministries

in Jordan as is the case in many parts of the world. This is largely due to the very sensitive nature of its duties and responsibilities. Its public policies have an immediate and direct effect on peoples' lives. The ministry, through the person of the health minister, sets and administers public health policies and directives. It plans actions, defines needs, identifies issues and implements policies. It is supposed to elevate the possible above the ideal, particularly that it has a limited budget which can hardly match the many requirements for health. Its budget for 1994 is JD 81 million, which is equivalent to about 5 per cent of the total budget of the Jordanian government. This percentage for health of the overall government spending is very low indeed, particularly

this ministerial office. This should not appear as a personal criticism to medical doctors who assumed this office in the past as it certainly is not intended to be so. Many proved successful and managed to move forward with health policies and issues. However, it may be reasonable to imply in this context that good medical doctors do not necessarily and automatically make good policy makers, particularly where health issues are concerned. They may excel as doctors or surgeons in their clinics or hospitals, but this is not a guarantee for appreciating the complexities of the job of minister of health which requires setting policies, solving problems, and matching scarce financial resources to need. This is apparent by the emphasis of most health ministers on secondary

health care. Jordan is getting "infected" by the developed world's "criteria" for health which centre on overestimating the value of doctors, medicalising social problems and exaggerating minor ailments. People often use expensive hospital care as opposed to primary care and local health centres and facilities, as the latter are viewed as inefficient and ill-equipped. For a public health official, there is a great need to develop a sense of appreciation of the issues and problems attached to health and be able to focus on developing policies through a wide-angle lens that takes everything into consideration. This, we still hope to see!

We constantly stressed that merit in government must be based on excellence and entrepreneurial spirit. The Cabinet member's honour is vested in his ability to fully execute the policies of the government as if they all agree with his own personal convictions. It certainly is not an exclusive personal responsibility for what he does. This is where we find the greatest controversy in the latest revelations by the minister of health. He took it upon himself to go on a crusade of accusations that were general in nature and affected everyone indiscriminately. The minister's claim that he had no other choice or option but the action he undertook cannot be accepted literally. It is doubtful he considered the range of alternatives within which he could have made different decisions. His pleas appeared as a transparent attempt to remove him from the chain of events within his ministry whilst distancing himself from the responsibility to act. The result has been a harmful outcome by all means and to all accused or concerned. In this respect, it must be noted that ignorance or underestimation of the consequences of his actions cannot be excused as he could have

acted differently. He is certainly responsible for the outcome of his action as much as he is obliged to justify all disclosed statements and prove all accusations. He has upset many people in the process whilst winning short-lived popularity with this media "bomb".

This publicity created the problems of conflict with generality. The health minister will now have to enter arguments he may not have previously considered. He is also more likely to change his mind or back up where he cannot answer those arguments, as appeared in his TV interview a few days after his initial statements. He caused public panic, confused issues and accused everyone. Henceforth, he has to answer to many investigative committees, parliamentary and otherwise, and has to prove his view point. He could have avoided

In public policy, people need to see serious, responsible work at the top so that they themselves put in every effort. The work of the Ministry of Health interacts with many people and groups of people, which includes labour, management, doctors, pharmacists, procurement and distribution personnel, international organisations, non-government organisations (NGOs) and many more. It hence needs a diverse team of experts to deal with this diverse blood of issues. The public official, to be successful, must try to persuade or at least consult with the divergent constituencies so they feel that their views are considered and are part of the final policy decision. An environment conducive to change must be created as it is difficult to simply order staff or people in general to change. One must be able to persuade to be effective. A strategist will usually

How far the punishment?

PRIME MINISTER Abdul Salam Majali took the right step in going straight to the U.N. Security Council committee monitoring the application of sanctions against Iraq in a bid to highlight the Jordanian case at the United Nations headquarters. Jordanian losses due to the observance of the sanctions imposed on Baghdad in the aftermath of the Gulf crisis of 1991 have been carefully documented and conservatively put at \$300 million annually. Numerous attempts have been made by Jordan to explain the extent of the hardships that our economy has sustained as a result of the application of these measures and to seek adequate compensation for them. It is no secret that industrial production in the country has been oriented with the Iraqi market in mind, in view of the geographic proximity and in order to maintain a trade balance commensurate with Jordan's dependence on the import of oil from Iraq.

All nations of the world which admit to having a stake in the stability and development of the Kingdom, whether for the promotion of the peace prospects in the Middle East or for the overall security of the region, have now an opportunity to translate this faith into action. This they could do by lifting the secondary "sanctions" that have been applied against Jordan and by ending their indiscriminate interference with sea shipping to and from Aqaba. Jordanian imports and exports have been unduly and unnecessarily jeopardised because of routine inspection of freighters bound to the Jordanian Red Sea port. Costs to the economy attributable to such unacceptable practices have been staggering. Needless to say, this country can ill afford the additional costs to its imports and exports. Sea lines to Jordan have also been curtailed considerably, by up to 30 per cent, because ship owners cannot afford the unusual delays experienced by their ships en route to Jordan. The alternative Jordanian proposal to replace sea searches by on-land inspection by a neutral party is a lesser evil, even though such idea had been anathema to us until the recent past. In principle, the proposal is a threat to Jordan's sovereignty but it would work out as a temporary alternative.

As to the prime minister's other major concern — that Jordanian applications numbering already in the thousands, requesting U.N. authorisation to export certain food and medical products be processed on criteria basis rather than on the existing case-by-case method — is also a step in the right direction. There is no sense in spending precious time on the applications and working on the 15 members of the committee to discuss each and every request if the majority of requests fall under similar general category. The current method is simply not cost effective. A more rational way to deal with this issue could be found in the Jordanian proposal. Still, the central problem lies in neither dimension of the application of sanctions against Iraq. It is the question of the sanctions themselves that has to be rechecked, especially after it was proven beyond a shadow of doubt that it is the Iraqi people who suffer most from them. Besides, Baghdad has enforced most if not all of the U.N. Security Council's resolutions imposed on it after the Gulf war. There is a good case to at least relax the sanctions and start lifting them on a gradual basis, commensurate with the extent of Iraqi adherence to the original U.N. resolutions.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

AL RA'I Arabic daily Sunday echoed King Hussein's warning to the assassins who murdered Naeb Maaitah, the Jordanian diplomat in Beirut, that they will not escape punishment and that the whole Jordanian family will avenge the blood of the martyr. The daily condemned as a dastard crime the killing of an innocent citizen serving his country in another Arab country, noting that the whole Jordanian family mourns the diplomat's death with deep grief. The killing of Naeb Maaitah, was directed against the whole Jordanian family and not against the diplomat alone, and the perpetrators and the assassins will not escape the wrath of the Jordanian family in the end, warned the daily. The killing of the diplomat, said the paper, can only bolster the Kingdom's determination to pursue its path of attaining national goals and to work diligently and incessantly towards securing a better and more secure future for the coming generation. The evil-doers and the assassins who fired the shot on him will sooner or later face justice, stressed the daily. Reaffirming that Jordan will be no means be discouraged by such crime from pursuing efforts to ensure peace and justice in the region, the paper echoed the King's words that Jordanians are the soldiers of the Arab Nation, fearing no death in their defence of justice and peace and the rights of the Arab Nation.

IF JORDAN plays its cards well, it will ensure the lifting of the siege imposed on Aqaba, said Tareq Masarweh a columnist in Al Ra'i Sunday. We do not count on the U.N. Sanction Committee, but rather on the U.S. administration which holds the final word in this matter, said the writer. The naval blockade on Aqaba is a military decision taken by Washington and not the United Nations committee to which the prime minister had presented the country's appeal for an end to the harassment of the Aqaba-bound vessels, said Masarweh. He said that the Aqaba port is being blockaded by the Americans while the Turkish ports are wide open for forwarding Iraq-bound goods. This is clearly a punishment for Jordan for not joining the coalition against Iraq and a reward to Turkey for its stand in support of the aggression on the Iraqi people, said the writer. The writer said Jordan should not issue statements hostile to the United States, like the Libyan media has been doing but rather play its cards well and demand through diplomatic channels that the siege be lifted and that compensation be paid to Jordan for the huge losses it incurred as a result of the siege and commitment to the sanctions on Iraq.

"The ministry of health, through the person of the health minister, sets and administers public health policies and directives. It plans actions, defines needs, identifies issues and implements policies. It is supposed to elevate the possible above the ideal, particularly that it has a limited budget which can hardly match the many requirements for health."

when compared to some of the developed nations' health budgets — in the U.S., for example, it is about 40 per cent with a total value of \$600 billion, and still many complaints about the inefficiency of the U.S. health system. Still, Jordan managed to improve the health status of its people, although conditions remained far from ideal.

One criterion that has constantly influenced and affected the Ministry of Health is the adamant insistence that a medical doctor must occupy

and tertiary health care, as being closest to their line of practice and expertise.

Primary health care, which is the essence and backbone element of health in the developing world, is increasingly neglected in Jordan. One must not confuse the issue by assuming that improving health services must necessarily lead to improvement of the overall health status in the country. One must also consider cost efficiency, better management of the health care system and distributive justice in access to

Democratisation, peace process take their toll on Brotherhood

By Mariam M. Shahin

AMMAN — Over the last two years, the willful integration of Jordan's largest Islamic party, the Islamic Action Front (IAF), into the existing political system has resulted in what political analysts believe to be an irreparable schism within the most powerful political grouping in the Kingdom.

Established as the political wing of the 49-year-old Muslim Brotherhood movement, most of the IAF's members are being classified as either pragmatic "doves" or doctrinal "hawks". With most of its estimated 5,000 members drawn from the ranks of the Muslim Brotherhood, the IAF and thus the Brotherhood are facing more internal dissent than at any time in their history.

The advent of the democratisation process in Jordan and the government's move to give credence to the IAF, as well as to 20 other political parties, by legalising its status as a party, brought the group into the political limelight. The 1989 and 1993 legislative elections unquestionably established that the IAF (and thus the Muslim Brotherhood) was the single most popular political organisation in the Kingdom.

The IAF was established as the official political organ of the Muslim Brotherhood so that the Brotherhood could retain its all encompassing status as an organisation which addresses aspects of daily life within and outside the framework of a political party. The Brotherhood Lower House deputies had fought from a platform as political party during debates on the political party law. "We are much more than a political party," Youssef Al Athem, a veteran Muslim Brotherhood member and deputy had said at the time of the debates in 1992. "We are a society."

But the Islamist success at the ballot boxes, which resulted in the inclusion of 22 members of the Muslim Brotherhood in the 1989-elected Parliament and the subsequent election of 16 IAF members to the 1993 Parliament, has left the group weaker rather than stronger, according to many political analysts in Jordan.

It is not so much a matter of losing "number-wise", the group having effectively lost six seats, say analysts, but of having "lost the confidence of the people."

"When the group entered government politics in a legislative capacity, it became clear that their hands would be tied on many issues," said a former Cabinet member. "They had an effect on national policies when they joined the government of Mudar Badran, but for the most part their attempts at changing policy backfired."

"The most obvious cases of would-be policies that the Brotherhood was trying to push were those pertaining to desegregation in school activities, a ban on alcohol and other social and educational-oriented issues," added the former Cabinet minister. "It made their supporters feel that the system was larger than them and that they could not affect it, no matter how hard they tried."

Most non-Islamist analysts see the IAF (Brotherhood) as split into two main factions. The first is a political, power-seeking group which is both equipped and able to engage in the political exchange with Jordan's government as well as other political groupings.

"Changing policy wherever possible is their aim — they know they cannot rule as such," explained a veteran observer of the Muslim Brotherhood. "This group seeks inclusion in the official circles and introduces its policies in the social and education sphere rather than in the political arena as such," he added.

"According to many Islamic teachings, a society must be purified of its non-Islamic constituents before an Islamic system of government or life is fully applied — the more dovish wing of the IAF believes in driving this aspect of their teaching home first and then steering full blast into the political arenas," said the analyst.

The make-up of the Jan. 1 elected IAF Executive Council predominantly reflects this trend within the party. Hawkish members of the previous council, such as Lower House of Parliament deputies Hamam Said, Ahmad Al Kofahi, Qasbiyeh and others, some extent the IAF rebel Ziad Abu Ghanima, failed to attain seats on the Executive Council.

Ahmad Al Kofahi, a veteran IAF Lower House deputy for the District of Irbid, had unsuccessfully lobbied within his party to boycott the November elections after the one-person, one-vote formula was amended to the Election Law late last summer, said Yasser Abu Hileleh, edi-

tor of Al Sabeel, an Islamic-oriented newspaper.

Mr. Kofahi and like-minded IAF and Brotherhood members are known to represent a minority in the Majlis Al Shura and leadership councils of the group. Some other outspoken and popular Muslim Brotherhood members, such as second district of Amman Deputy Sheikh Abdul Munem Abu Zant, failed to win a seat in the Shura council altogether. "He is in the Brotherhood and IAF because he is popular on the street — but he is not liked among the IAF cadre," explained Mr. Abu Hileleh.

The newly elected Majlis Al Shura and its Executive Committee is made up mostly of the hardcore IAF and Muslim Brotherhood cadre which are considered moderate by most observers. They are senator Abdul Latif Arabiyat and deputies Abdul Rahim Ekour, Abdullah Akaleb and Hamzeh Mansour.

When Abdul Latif Arabiyat failed to win enough votes at the legislative poll on the IAF ticket, he was appointed as a member of the Senate.

But there are still younger IAF members "up and coming in the movement" who are expected to keep the old cadre line. One of them is Zaqqa Deputy and Majlis Al Shura Executive Council member Bassam Emoush. Subsequent to his election, Mr. Emoush began contributing articles to local Arabic dailies in which he forwarded his view on how IAF politics should be advanced. Mr. Emoush outlined the very doctrines by which the Muslim Brotherhood has been operating in Jordan since King Abdullah Ben Hussein inaugurated the Muslim Brotherhood offices in Amman 49 years ago.

Education, publications, social ethics and morality should be the IAF's prime targets, said Mr. Emoush. "The rehabilitation of society is what Mr. Emoush is talking about," said a spokesman at the IAF offices in Abdali when asked to specify what Mr. Emoush meant in his articles. Mr. Emoush hinted that political issues such as the peace process and the economic reforms being carried out in Jordan were "not prime targets."

While the hawkish members of the IAF are also pushing for a "social rehabilitation" of the society, most believe it must go hand-in-

band with political change which begins by boycotting "the enemies," agents of Zionism and America."

Since 1945, when the Muslim Brotherhood society was inaugurated in Jordan, the hawks amongst the Brotherhood in Jordan have been successfully "contained" by the doves. A cohesive group spirit and inter-party discipline based on common long-term objectives have kept the doves and the hawks together.

The government's age-old feud with leftist and militant Arab nationalists kept the Brotherhood and successive governments on the same side of the political spectrum.

Political parties stressing feudalism, regionalism and sectarian themes are on the rise in Jordan and their theories are bound to create a backlash amongst large segments of the population should they feel threatened by them.

Thus, the internal differences amongst IAF members, the changing relationship between the IAF and the government as well as the rise of new political elements in Jordan are all contributing to the creation of a more hawkish wing amongst Islamists in general and the IAF in particular.

But it is the prospect of peace with the still undefined state of Israel that is likely to be the last straw for orthodox Muslims who have kept a form of self-discipline for a greater common good throughout much of the last three decades.

"The peace with Israel is weakening the back of political parties in Jordan and elsewhere," said a veteran political scientist. "A radicalisation of political movements and particularly the fundamentalist Islamic movements is undoubtedly going to be one of the many outcomes of whatever type of agreement is made between the Arab and Israel."

The promises made are likely to be unpalatable for most people and thus, sooner or later, people will find a venue to respond," said one hardcore Muslim Brotherhood activist on condition of anonymity.

While the IAF opposes the peace process, the group is not expected to pull out of Parliament or the official political structure of Jordan if a peace agreement between Jordan and Israel is signed and a "normalisation process" starts. "They will create a lot of

noise and threaten to resign and stage a walk out, but in the end they will sit down and go on as they are," said the political scientist. Parallel to the more superficial acts of protest that the IAF is expected to stage, the more radical members are likely to become more apparent, say observers.

"There is no doubt that the Israelis will be fought by fundamentalist Islamists in Jordan as elsewhere," said the political scientist. "Those who deal with the Israelis on commercial or other levels will be boycotted and ostracised by the Islamists and their followers," added the political scientist.

Depending on how impartial the final agreement between that Israel and the Palestinians in particular is, will dictate how daring the attacks against Israeli interest will be, predict observers.

"If Israel withdraws back to the 1967 borders, it will be difficult for the Islamists to attack and get popular support at this stage. But this is a most unlikely scenario — thus the militants will have popular support in Jordan when they attack Israel or its interests," predicted the political commentator.

The leaders of this more radical wing of so-called militants are "unknown to the general public," says Islamist journalist Yasser Abu Hileleh. They are "not populists, but thinkers —

many work in the more technical, scientific fields, rather than in politics."

For them the continuing integration of the IAF into the status quo is likely to become "morally unbearable" and a peace with Israel is likely to mark the breaking point between them and their more post-seeking brethren.

"The implementation of the peace process will draw the lines in the sand for many groups," said a veteran political scientist. "Even if the IAF and Hamas continue to field their candidates in their respective committees, more radical action groups will appear from amongst their ranks who take the word of God as their guiding light — they will conduct a jihad — there is no doubt about it."

While political scientists, commentators and observers continue to predict how the Islamists will develop their strategies, the Muslim Brotherhood and the IAF will undoubtedly continue their efforts to contain the factions among them which are likely to take much of the group's overall popular support with them if they create a splinter group.

"The IAF and Brotherhood leadership, like all established leadership, have tasted power and like any other politically oriented group will fight their own to retain it," predicted a member of the more radical wing within the Brotherhood.

LETTERS

No more bloodshed

To the Editor:

Yesterday Jordanians suffered the loss of one of their diplomatic delegates in Beirut, Naeb Maaytah, father to three children, was shot on his way to the Jordanian embassy.

It has been a long time since the diplomats of the countries of this region stopped worrying about being killed while on duty. That period was a state of relief for the public as much as change had occurred as a consequence of the adoption of new strategic tactics on the part of the planners of such "accidents."

This region is now witnessing crucial and gigantic changes. To one's like or dislike, these ongoing changes are gaining inevitability.

But civility and consideration for other's lives must find way to our hearts and minds. Barbarous acts should stop and people should grow up to the expectations of our time and of the world.

Lutfi Hussein,
P.O. Box 2446,
Yarmouk Univ.,
Irbid.

Right to life highlighted by food, medicine issue

By Waleed Sadi

THREE cheers for His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan the Regent for expeditiously providing so openly and effectively the necessary political will necessary to get to the bottom of the "food and drug" crisis so courageously exposed by the minister of health, Dr. Abdul Rahim Malhas. It so happens that the food, water and medicine that people consume and the air they breathe go to the heart of the right to life that all existing human rights instruments religiously enshrine and cherish. On a scale of one to ten, the right to life occupies the first seat under any system of government. Yet, amidst the occupation with civil and political human rights, the right to life has been compromised across the board not only in our country, but practically all countries, either by dire neglect of environmental considerations or by deprivation of adequate health system or even by lack of economic development that denies many peoples of the world a fair opportunity to gain their livelihood. Even the most advanced societies have been caught hushing up scandals affecting life per se.

The recent shocking disclosures in the U.S. that nuclear development was carried out in such a way as to purposely jeopardise the life of many innocent Americans in a bid to test the effect of radiation is a classic example. When industrial countries which are supposed to set an example for others use

their own people as guinea pigs, no wonder developing countries have not been encouraged yet to adopt an environmental culture that can protect peoples' health and lives from man-made disasters. In retrospect, some of the threats to life in developed countries due for example to radiation from nuclear energy whether peaceful or military or to sheer blood contamination, as happened in France last year, are small in magnitude and dimension in comparison to related threats in underdeveloped nations.

Yet, the struggle to eliminate such threat in the Third World must be promoted and religiously upheld since they stand to profit from the painful experiences of the richer countries and by so doing avoid their costly trials and errors. It is therefore most unfortunate that the developing countries, including Jordan, are not giving environmental considerations and control over the quality of their foodstuff, water resources and the worthiness of the air their peoples breathe the necessary priority on the false premise that any such priority would impede their economic development especially in the industrial sector.

This is obviously a callous and short-sighted view of the issue. The clean-up bill and the costs of other necessary remedial measures in the intermediate and long range terms, could be economically catastrophic in comparison to their corresponding expenses at the start of the problem.

Against this backdrop, the stunning disclosures of Dr.

Malhas about the state of the food and drugs consumed in this country is a blessing in human rights terms. An earlier exposure of the problem would have made the cost of its treatment much less, even though we have yet to determine the extent of the problem. The main point here is that the issue has been given prominence at all levels, official, public or private. The full involvement of all sectors of society in Jordan in the ongoing debate on the subject is of course a healthy feature of the democratic process.

Human Rights File

The significance of these recent revelations obviously go beyond food and drugs. Once the Pandora box is opened on such subjects, other related aspects would become also centres of interest. The indiscriminate use of pesticides and insecticides in the Jordan Valley has yet to attract official attention in spite of repeated sounding of alarm about them. I personally conducted a limited survey of farmers in the Jordan Valley and discovered that there is no supervision whatsoever of the use of such chemicals. The case of how clean water was pumped to the East Ghor canal few years ago,

where it became contaminated and then pumped to Amman at a considerable cost to the country neighbouring on JD 45 million is a grim reminder of lack of adequate governmental concern about public welfare.

Last summer, a respected Swiss journal published a report that blood contaminated with HIV was shipped to Jordan and other Middle Eastern countries. This is a very serious allegation that requires verification and an adequate response from the government. Yet, there has been no reaction or denial from our authorities of this news report till this moment in time.

One can go on listing other matters that affect the right to life in Jordan, but this would not be the central issue. The main point is to cultivate officials who can develop real concern about such issues. Once that is accomplished, the public can be awakened to the facts to life and made to get involved in a responsible way to address such problems. In democracy, the people can also put the process of investigation into motion by sober and direct participation in the dissemination of accurate information. The necessary political will to activate a profound and effective scrutiny of all dangers to life in the country can therefore be galvanised by the people themselves or by the government. We are indeed fortunate that in the case of Dr. Malhas there has been a simultaneous and parallel official and public interest. This augurs well for the national decision to get to the bottom of this basic human rights problem this time.

Arafat, Peres closer to accord

(Continued from page 1)

"We took on one of the most complicated issues in modern age... something which looked like a phenomenon without a solution," Mr. Peres told the conference of political and business leaders.

"Many of us feel that if we can solve the Palestinian dispute, all disputes in the world are solvable," he said. "Let's try our hands, let's mobilise our... hearts," he said to loud

applause.

Mr. Peres said on the eve of the talks that he came to Davos "with a desire to sign" an agreement, "but it can very well be that there will only be the opportunity to talk."

"We are holding negotiations on sensitivities, on nations, very difficult sensitivities," Mr. Peres said. "Every word has a different echo."

A senior member of the PLO had raised hopes early

Sunday that a compromise had been reached.

Yasser Arafat, a senior adviser to Mr. Arafat, said the trade-off reached in the overnight session was acceptable to the PLO, but that he did not know whether the Israeli government would accept it.

"We have a compromise on the table. If both sides say yes, then we have an agreement," said Mr. Arafat. "We accepted."

Israel army sources quoted

Palestinian sources as saying that the PLO had agreed to a compromise on crossings over the Jordan River, but that there was no agreement about the town of Rafah.

Rafah is a Gaza Strip town on the border with Egypt where Israeli soldiers have been subject to frequent attacks.

Mr. Musa said the Palestinians and Israelis had made "definite progress towards agreement that would clear the way for implementation (of the deal)."

"We believe the Middle East is going to move steadily towards an era of peace, justice and development," he declared.

Mr. Musa confirmed that Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak had invited the two sides to Cairo for the final signing which he hoped would be very soon.

Settlers defiant

Jewish settlers bent on

founding a new settlement in the occupied West Bank defied Israeli troops Saturday night for the second day in succession, blocking roads leading to the site between Hebron and Bethlehem, military sources said.

They put up barricades in an attempt to stop troops approaching the site near the existing settlement of Gush Etzion south of Jerusalem. However, troops took over the site and proclaimed it a military area off limits to the press and public.

About 100 settlers opposed to the accord on autonomy for the Palestinians in Jericho and the Gaza Strip moved onto the site and camped there in tents on Thursday night.

Soldiers made several attempts to evict the settlers who came back as soon as the troops left. On Friday, the troops had dismantled the tents and arrested three of the settlers.

On Wednesday, about 50 Jewish settlers occupied an empty house near the Kyriat Arba settlement near Hebron to found a settlement. One said the law stopping Jews settling there was "immoral and deserves to be broken."

The rush to set up illegal settlements is part of a plan backed by hardline settlers to "double" the number of settlements in the occupied territories in protest at the Sept. 13 accord on autonomy for Palestinians in Jericho and the Gaza Strip.

The plan was initially launched by the council of Jewish settlements in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip but was subsequently taken up by a more radical group.

Housing Minister Binyamin Ben Eliezer warned that the government would "allow no one to break the law." Heavy troop reinforcements have been deployed in the Kyriat Arba and Hebron area which is a stronghold of opposition to the autonomy deal.

Syria: Bilaterals encouraging

(Continued from page 1)

pave the way for the achievement of a real progress," the paper said, Israel should come up with "new ideas" on full withdrawal from the Golan Heights, it added.

Syria wants Israel to withdraw fully from the Golan, a strategic plateau occupied by Israel in the 1967 Middle East war. Israel wants full normalisation of ties with Damascus in return for a partial withdrawal.

"Syria wants to hear something new from the Israeli side to activate the Washington talks. What is required by Israel is a serious position that would respond to the initiative made by President Hafez Al Assad."

"Syria had reiterated that peace is a strategic option for her and that the peace talks should achieve the aspired results but this depends on Israel's response to the call for full withdrawal from the occupied Arab lands..." Tisbreen said.

The paper also reiterated Syria's rejection of partial or separate peace treaties with the Jewish state and said such deals could not bring peace to the region.

Arms control

Egypt's representative

opened a meeting in Cairo Sunday on Middle East arms control with a renewed plea to make the region free of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons.

Nabil Fahmy, political adviser to Foreign Minister Amr Musa, said the first step should be confidence building measures by all the region's countries, a veiled call for Israel to be more open about its nuclear weapons programme.

Mr. Fahmy's comment raised the essential problem in Mideast arms control, resistance by Arab states to controls on other weapons while Israel possesses nuclear warheads.

A year ago, Egypt and other Arab countries refused to join an international chemical weapons ban, saying Israel must first sign the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. Israel refuses official comment on its nuclear arms, saying only it will not be the first to introduce nuclear weapons in the region.

Mr. Fahmy's plea was made to an experts' workshop held under Middle East multilateral peace talks on arms control. The representatives from 38 countries will meet through Thursday.

An Israeli delegation headed by Hanan Baron arrived Sunday to take part in the meeting. Syria and Lebanon are not attending.

'Assailant(s) seized documents'

(Continued from page 1)

weight to reveal the perpetrators and pursue them," Future TV said.

Almost the entire diplomatic corps fled the Lebanese capital during the 1975-90 civil war, when assassinations, hostage-

taking and suicide bombing attacks became rampant.

In the past year, the government has intensified its campaign to lure foreigners back, claiming Beirut was now secure again.

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House condemns killing

(Continued from page 1)

the airlines which has a general director.

But others said the role of the RJ chairman was not marginal and the position requires vast technical knowledge and specialisation.

"RJ should not be treated like any other government institution. The role of the (RJ) chairman cannot be marginal," said Deputy Abdul Karim Al Kabarti.

Only 24 out of 66 deputies present voted in favour of the Judiciary Committee's recommendation. A two-third

majority is needed to 'overrule a veto' by the King.

In accordance with regulations, the House postponed till the next ordinary session further debate on the draft law.

The House also approved a JD 70 annex to the 1993 budget.

Deputies also approved a draft law on education which was returned to the House by the Senate after introducing a number of amendments to it.

Before endorsing the law, which was approved by the 11th Parliament, the House

amended the definition of "a teacher" to include those who teach or occupy teaching positions in private and government schools. The new definition excludes administrative and other Ministry of Education employees whom the old definition could be interpreted to include.

Deputies also voted down a Senate amendment that would have the teaching licence cancelled if teachers could not keep up with new developments in the field in accordance with regulations that the minister of education would issue.

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Russian prime minister woos West but sends wrong signals

DAVOS, Switzerland (R) — Russia's Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin wooed Western business and political leaders this weekend with ringing pledges that there would be no return to a Soviet-style economy.

But he appeared to shut off any chance of winning financial aid from major governments and international institutions by setting inflation targets far higher than outside leaders view as tolerable in a market

reform package.

He may have disturbed the West with a confidently couched bid at the Davos World Economic Forum for Russia's admission not only to the "Group of Seven" club of major industrial powers but also to the European Union.

"Although he is making the right noises about going ahead with reform, I think he is showing poor understanding of the impact of some of the things he says on the outside world,"

said Swedish economist Anders Aslund.

Mr. Aslund, who resigned last week as an adviser to Russia's government when key reformers dropped out of the new Chernomyrdin cabinet, told Reuters the 54-year-old prime minister seemed to have accepted a fresh surge in inflation.

On Saturday, Mr. Chernomyrdin told a news conference at the forum — an annual gathering of top businessmen

and politicians from round the world — that his new team hoped to keep monthly inflation in the first half of 1994 to around 20 per cent.

"By December, I think we can reduce it to between 15 and 18 per cent," declared the prime minister, appointed by President Boris Yeltsin in December 1992 as a centrist figure who could bring conservatives and liberal reformers together.

But the figures would mark an inflation jump from the 12

per cent achieved in December last year amid tight controls under then finance minister Boris Yeltsin Fyodorov, and were more than double Mr. Chernomyrdin's own predictions just over a week ago.

"What it means is that in effect he has abandoned the struggle against inflation," said Mr. Aslund. "If they recognise the cost of their policies will be that high, it is bound in reality to be even higher."

"It means any international financing for government economic stabilisation programmes will be foregone," he pointed out.

Strangely, Mr. Chernomyrdin's upward revision of his own forecasts came on the eve

of a visit to Moscow by an International Monetary Fund team to try to reach agreement on a reform programme and a \$1.5 billion loan.

IMF officials make clear they expect tough action to pull inflation down before they will release any financing, but all the signals from Mr. Chernomyrdin suggest he is ready to increase inflationary cheap credits to state industry and agriculture.

Mr. Fyodorov, also at the forum, has predicted that freer credit under Mr. Chernomyrdin and central bank chief Viktor Geraschenko — defended fiercely by the prime minister at his news conference — will bring inflation of at

least 30 per cent by mid-year.

Grigory Yavlinsky, another leading Russian economist of the younger generation in Davos, told reporters he expected a rate of 50 per cent by the end of the summer. "At that point, we will be in hyperinflation," he said.

But Mr. Aslund, a long-time analyst of the old Soviet Union with close contacts across the political spectrum in Moscow, said he saw no hidden agenda for return to communist economic policies behind Mr. Chernomyrdin's policies.

"They think they can spend their way out of inflation by increasing production. But in present Russian conditions that is hogwash," he said.

The Swedish economist said even the communists and agrarians in the new Russian parliament elected in December — and who are believed to exert an influence on the prime minister — were in favour of market reforms.

"They are more like lobbyists for the heavy industrial and farm chiefs who want to tilt the market in their own favour," said Mr. Aslund.

The prime minister himself told reporters in Davos he had learned what the Soviet system of central planning really meant as chief of the gas industry in earlier days. "There can be no return to that," he declared firmly.

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Poland leftist leader says economy priority

DAVOS, Switzerland (R) — Poland's new left-wing government is committed to economic reform, and growth and financial discipline take precedence over social programmes, the leader of the country's former communist party said.

Aleksander Kwasniewski, youthful chairman of the Democratic Left Alliance (SLD), the major party in Poland's left-wing coalition, reassured business leaders at the World Economic Forum at the weekend that market reforms remained on track.

"The priority of the government is the development of the economy and growth in GDP," Mr. Kwasniewski said.

"The main elements (of reforms) are continuing and must be continued. There's no other way for our country to move to democracy... a market economy... and an integrated Europe," he told the annual forum at the Swiss ski resort of Davos.

The SLD party of reformed communists formed a coalition government with the Polish Peasants Party (PSL), whose roots also go back to the communist era, in November after the two emerged as the strongest parties from September's elections.

Mr. Kwasniewski, 39, was himself minister for youth and sport in the last communist

government, which collapsed in 1989, allowing the Solidarity trade union to take over and signalling the end of communist power across eastern Europe.

In September it seemed as if the SLD victory could be part of a neo-communist tide sweeping eastern Europe, as ordinary people revolted against the austerity of harsh economic reforms.

In fact the SLD is more like a Western social democratic party, backing privatisation, foreign investment, a tight budget, and Polish membership in the European Union and NATO.

It did campaign on the need to expand social programmes to protect people suffering from the impact of the shock therapy of the first reformist governments.

But since taking power the left-wing government has

emphasised the continuity of economic reforms, and tried to show itself as being as responsible as its centre-right predecessor.

Mr. Kwasniewski said the election, far from being a reaction against reform, had been a sign of Poland's democratic maturity, as voters balanced the needs of continuing reform with their own hopes and expectations.

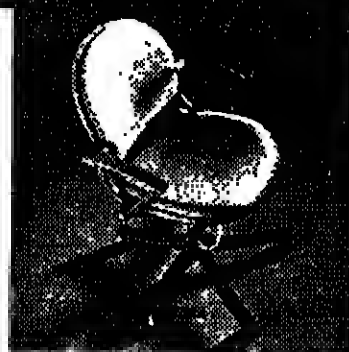
"Society accepts the main direction of the changes of the last five years," he said.

The centre-right government that emerged from solidarity and its allies lost power just when the reforms were beginning to pay off.

Poland's gross domestic product expanded by around four per cent last year, the strongest growth rate in Europe.

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HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR MONDAY JANUARY 31, 1994

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

GENERAL TENDENCIES: This last day of the month finds you with a split centre of attention and a need to build up better feelings with others by acts of courtesy and consideration. Resist an urge to speak abruptly to a regular associate.

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) While you are anxious to enjoy yourself, it is not necessary that you spend a great deal of money doing it. Forget eccentric ideas, too.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) If you labour industriously and are alert to new ideas, outlets, this can be a day of real accomplishment for you. Keep busily occupied and it will end.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) By leaving your work and going off for a good time with an associate could have dire results that could take a long time to live down.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) It is fine for you to enjoy yourself today, but take care you do not use funds that are entrusted to you in some business affairs or you will certainly regret it later.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) Be sure you carry through with any promises made to associates, though it means giving up comforts or getting into an argument at home.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) Try not to let a secret anxiety keep you from getting

into the world of activity and accomplishing what you had planned as well as getting the information you need.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) Avoid making those radical changes in financial matters that you have in mind. Take inventory of possessions instead and plan how to increase abundance slowly but wisely.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) Don't give in to those ideas about changing type of work you do or acting in a high-handed way with higher-ups or you will not be successful.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Every opportunity is yours now to clear up what seems mysterious and also to get yourself nominated as the logical leader of some project.

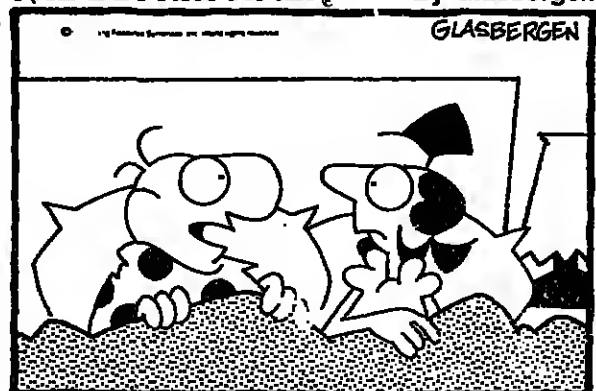
CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) You find that a real pal is very desirous of assisting you at this time, but unfortunately does not have the ability, as a jealous expert cleverly points out.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) Use your own judgment in whatever matters are at hand that need immediate attention and you avoid all that preaching from higher-ups or partners.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) Get a firm hold on your emotions during the morning and don't permit the actions of others to disturb you in any way. Work hard and keep mum.

THE BETTER HALF.

By Glasbergen

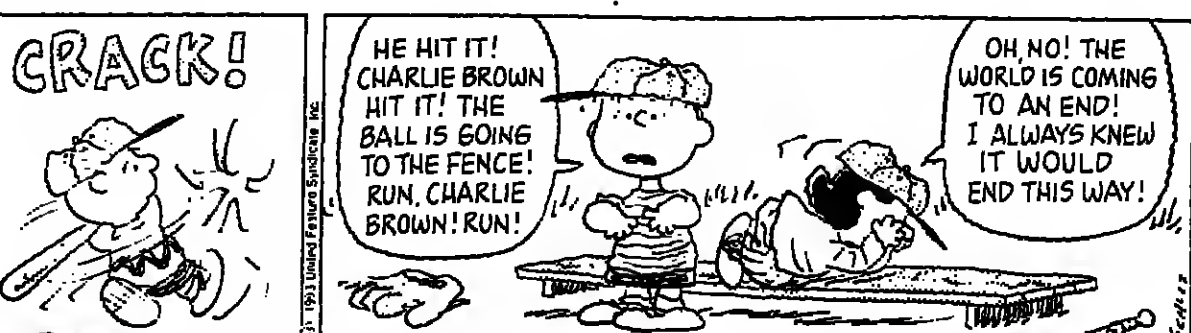


"Tell me a bedtime story where my boss is turned into a beanstalk and I cut him down to size!"

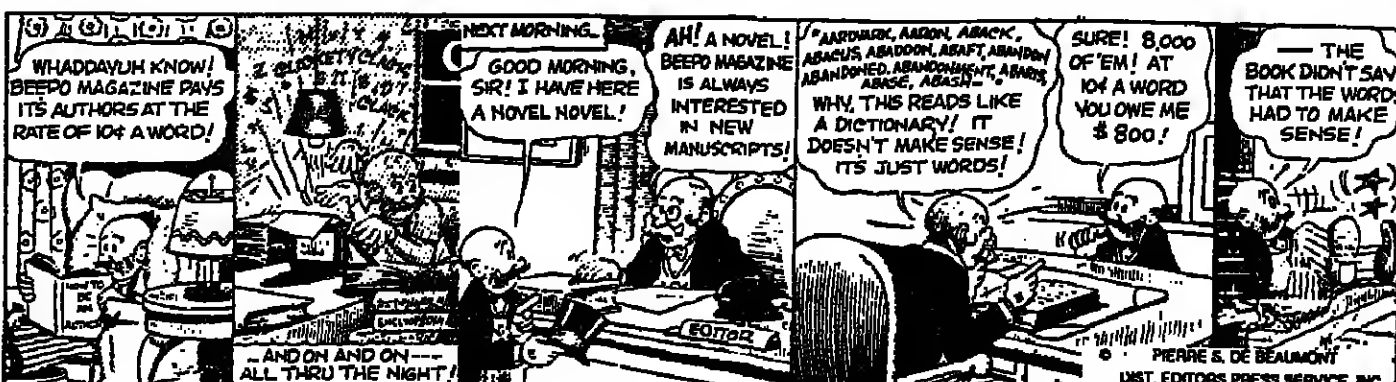
Peanuts



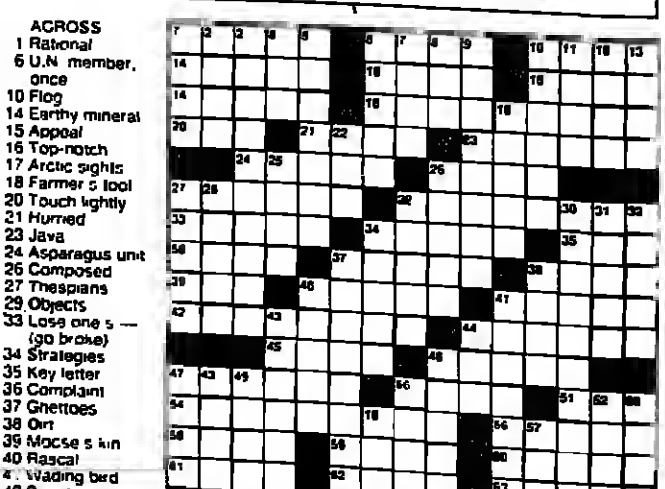
Andy Capp



Mutt'n'Jeff



THE Daily Crossword by Kenneth V. Holden



Yesterday's Puzzle Solved:



- ACROSS
- 1 Rational
 - 6 U.N. member, once
 - 10 Flag
 - 14 Earthly mineral
 - 15 Appal
 - 16 Top-notch
 - 17 Arctic sight
 - 18 Farmer's tool
 - 20 Touch lightly
 - 21 Hurred
 - 23 Java
 - 24 Asparagus unit
 - 26 Composed
 - 27 Thesians
 - 29 Objects
 - 32 Lose one's (go broke)
 - 34 Strategies
 - 35 Key letter
 - 36 Complaint
 - 37 Gnetoes
 - 38 On
 - 39 Moose's kin
 - 40 Rascal
 - 42 Supplant
 - 44 Poisons
 - 45 Overhang
 - 46 Heard
 - 47 Fer
 - 50 Shytic
 - 51 Ewe's mate
 - 54 Kind of dove
 - 56 Endure
 - 58 - vana
 - 59 Alumnus, for short
 - 60 Inspects closely
 - 61 Tear
 - 62 Corn servings
 - 63 Praiseful songs
- DOWN
- 1 Upper room
 - 2 Home of the Bruins
 - 3 Short piano piece
 - 4 Resentment
 - 5 Menu selection
 - 6 Before cut or class
 - 7 Moved smoothly
 - 8 Harden
 - 9 Masked animals
 - 10 Ba (meddole)
 - 11 Pan's tool
 - 12 Concerning
 - 13 Small dog, for short
 - 19 Chet's denison
 - 22 Dance step
 - 25 Meat
 - 26 Quizzed
 - 28 Pepper variety
 - 29 Feather
 - 30 Humorous
 - 31 Certain portion
 - 32 Jockey's attire
 - 34 "A" in the "Sun"
 - 37 Salvage, in a way
 - 38 Escal
 - 40 Not laut
 - 41 Tolerate
 - 43 Used a telephone
 - 44 Alphabet run
 - 46 Luges
 - 47 Partially open
 - 48 Lose color
 - 49 Sacred image
 - 50 From a distance
 - 52 Yemen capital
 - 53 Diorad
 - 54 Gershwin
 - 57 Dove

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NATO could act immediately after U.N. green light in Bosnia

BRUSSELS (R) — NATO could act immediately if the United Nations asked it to provide air power to help U.N. troops in the besieged Bosnian town of Srebrenica or to reopen Tuzla Airport for relief aid, a NATO military source said Sunday.

"We have all the resources and the procedures in place. We could act immediately," the source said.

U.N. Secretary-General Boutros Ghali said Friday he had delegated to his special representative in the former Yugoslavia, Yasushi Akashi, the authority to approve any request for close air support from the commander of the U.N. Protection Force in either Tuzla or Srebrenica.

Until then, he had insisted on retaining the right to approve first use of air power, provided by NATO countries.

NATO, which has an existing mandate to provide support to U.N. forces, has for months had bombers, ground attack aircraft and fighters patrolling over Bosnia.

"We have aircraft overflying the area all the time. Conceivably, the response time could be in a matter of minutes to help U.N. troops," one military source said.

But he stressed that the operation would have to take place in stages with a minimum amount of force used.

"I think in Srebrenica, especially, there would be a minimum amount of force as the troops rotation seems to be working better now, Tuzla Airport is much more complicated," the NATO military source said.

Du. "U.N. peacekeepers have been trying to get into Srebrenica to replace about 150 Canadian soldiers there while Serb forces have encircled the airport in Tuzla."

Dr. Ghali gave Mr. Akashi the authority to take action in

the two areas after studying a report detailing military plans in the besieged towns. The report followed a NATO summit in Brussels this month which asked the U.N. to draw up plans.

Details of the report have not been made available. NATO said it has been in daily contact with the U.N. to draw up the plans.

While Dr. Ghali gave the go-ahead for close air support for U.N. peacekeepers, he did not indicate his view on offensive action, or air strikes where specific targets were chosen.

One NATO source said there would have to be an "absolutely dire situation" in Bosnia, possibly a big attack on U.N. peacekeepers, before air strikes were launched.

"Public opinion would really have to be behind us before air strikes were launched," he added.

Some NATO members, such as Canada, have strong reservations about air strikes fearing they will put at risk workers and U.N. peacekeepers themselves at too much risk.

Britain Sunday decided to resume aid convoys in Bosnia after a three-day suspension triggered by the murder of an aid worker.

The British Overseas Development Administration (ODA) which is responsible for humanitarian relief said its operations would restart Monday and that convoy teams in Bosnia were keen to get back to work.

The ODA halted aid distribution following the killing of driver Paul Goodall Thursday when he was abducted in central Bosnia with two colleagues who escaped with gunshot wounds.

Suspected Muslim bandits were blamed for the attack. The Muslim-led Bosnian government told the U.N.

Saturday that four men were being questioned.

The incident was a fresh blow to U.N. efforts to get food and other supplies to almost three million people trapped by the 22-month civil war between Muslims, Croats and Serbs.

Convoys have suffered constant harassment by all three sides.

U.N. peacekeepers said convoys were again moving between Zenica and Kakanj after being blocked by starving villagers last week.

"The route is covered with snow but now free of bandits," U.N. Protection Force spokesman Bill Aikman said in Sarajevo.

British General Sir Michael Rose, the new UNPROFOR commander in Bosnia, had a first meeting with Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadzic and leader reporters.

"I am grateful to Dr. Karadzic for the assistance that he has given us in showing that the convoys are running freely in this part of the country."

Gen. Rose said he and Dr. Karadzic had discussed means of demilitarising sensitive areas of Sarajevo which has been under Serb siege throughout the war and was hit by 60 artillery shells Saturday.

Col. Aikman reported Bosnia's battle zones were relatively quiet at the weekend with the exception of the southern town of Mostar where Croats were continuing to heavily bombard besieged Muslims.

Croatian Foreign Minister Mate Granic expressed his "regrets" over the deaths of three Italian journalists in southern Bosnia Friday, in a letter to his Italian counterpart Beniamino Andreatta published by the Croatian press Sunday.

In the letter Mr. Granic expressed his "deep concern and

regret" over the incident, but refrained from openly condemning the Bosnian Croat (HVO) forces responsible for the shelling which killed the journalists.

Mr. Andreatta had written to Mr. Granic Saturday saying he was certain that "the Croatian government will quickly denounce such a loathsome incident."

The three Italians, who worked for the RAI Broadcasting Network, were killed by HVO shelling in Mostar Friday as they were preparing a report on the orphans' hospital in the besieged Muslim eastern side of the city.

"I once again vigorously condemn these odious crimes and assure you that the Croatian government will not hesitate to participate in an independent investigation to determine the circumstances of this tragic incident," Mr. Granic wrote.

Meanwhile, thousands of Italians paid their last respects Sunday to the three television journalists killed in Bosnia.

Queues snaked around the headquarters of RAI in the northeastern city of Trieste as people lined up to file silently and sadly past the coffins of the three victims.

Reporter Marco Luchetta, 41, cameraman Dario D'Angelo, 41, and technician Alessandro Otta, 37, were killed in the Bosnian Croat mortar attack. "I feel as if I have lost one of my own family," a middle-aged mourner told state television.

"Let's hope that their sacrifice finally does some good," added an elderly man.

The Italians, based in Trieste close to the border with Slovenia, were in Mostar to film a documentary for RAI.

A funeral will be held for the journalists in Trieste's San Giusto Cathedral Monday.

Nearly 100 hurt in Bangladesh city polls violence

DHAKA (R) — Nearly 100 people were injured, some of them by bullets, as militants stormed polling centres with guns and bombs during key city elections in Bangladesh Sunday, witnesses and hospital officials said.

More than 35 people were admitted to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital and dozens of others were discharged after receiving first aid.

"Most of the injuries were caused by splinters from home-made bombs and bullets," said one hospital doctor.

At least 25 people were injured in poll violence in Chittagong, Khulna and Rajshahi — three other cities where voting was held to elect city mayors and ward commissioners.

Witnesses said violence erupted after armed activists took control of polling stations at gunpoint and filled ballot boxes, shattering hopes of candidates and the election commission of a clean vote.

The violence broke out despite deployment of more than 30,000 police and paramilitary soldiers at polling stations in the four cities and a government crackdown on unauthorised carrying of arms.

Local officials said the voting was relatively peaceful in Chittagong, Khulna and Rajshahi.

"We had no major problem except for a few incidents of clashes and bombings," one Chittagong official said.

The election commission had warned that anyone involved in violence, disruption of voting and trying to stuff ballot boxes would be jailed for up to 10 years.

Police said they had arrested several people for attacks on polling centres in Dhaka but did not know their identity.

Opposition political parties alleged the assailants belonged to the ruling Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), which denied the charge.

Polls opened at 7 a.m. (0100 GMT) and closed at 3 p.m. (0900 GMT), polling officials said voting in at least seven centres had been postponed.

However, no one at the election commission was immediately available for comment. It had been said earlier that the first results were expected in the late evening.

Nearly three million people had been expected to vote, 1.7 million of them in Dhaka, in the first direct elections for four city mayors and some 200 ward commissioners.

Witnesses said the turnout in the four cities was heavy but irregularities were detected in several voters lists.

"I have been living in this area for 35 years and I have voted in all past elections. This time they have struck off my name," Supreme Court lawyer Matiar Rahman Khan told Reuters at one Dhaka centre.

Police used teargas and clubs to disperse armed mobs attacking polling centres in Dhaka. Witnesses said voters ran for cover as smoke from bombs and teargas filled the air.

"This goes totally contrary to assertions by the Election Commission and the government that the elections will be free and honest," Mohammad Hossain, a teacher, said.

Major political parties, including the BNP and its main rival the Awami League, were contesting the city elections.

Japan coalition leaders eye elections, realignment

TOKYO (R) — Japan's ruling coalition, after pushing through electoral law reform and heavily-diluted anti-graft measures, is readying for elections under a new system possibly by autumn, its leaders revealed Sunday.

Elections will likely spark upheavals in the governing and opposition camps, generating political realignments that could eventually lead to the creation of a two or three-party system, according to some coalition chiefs and political analysts.

For the time being, they agree, Japan is in store for a period of coalition rule with a changing cast of players.

"Elections are possible anytime from this autumn," said Masayoshi Takemura, cabinet spokesman and head of one of the eight groups in the governing alliance.

"It's impossible that a two-party system will emerge (prior to or after the first elections)," he said on television.

"I think there'll be about three or four main parties fighting in out in the new electoral districts."

Mr. Takemura, who helped cobble together the fragile alliance of conservatives, centrists and hardline socialists, said it was unlikely to field joint candidates in upcoming elections.

Racing against a Saturday midnight deadline, Prime Minister Morihiro Hosokawa struck a deal with the opposition Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) and passed into law a plan to overhaul the discredited electoral system for the first time since 1947.

The agreement, reached after six years of debate that

directly caused the downfall of two previous LDP governments, was passed by parliament Saturday with hours to spare.

"Since it's going to take until October to set up the new system, elections could come anytime after that," said Yuichi Ichikawa, number two in the coalition's Komeito.

The electoral plan will replace Japan's multi-seat constituencies, making up a 511-seat lower house, with a system combining 300 single-seat districts and 200 allocated on a proportional representation (PR) list.

The downside of the deal was that Mr. Hosokawa had to agree to increase to 300 from 274 the number of single seats — a development expected to bolster a big party like the LDP. Smaller coalition parties would fare better on the PR list.

Mr. Hosokawa also gave in on the most contentious issue — banning corporate donations to individual politicians, which are regarded as the root cause of rampant corruption and Japan's many recent bribery scandals.

The scandal-marred LDP, the pro-business party that ruled for 38 years until its July election defeat, refused to talk compromise until Mr. Hosokawa agreed to scrap his proposed ban and allow candidates 500,000 yen (\$4,500) from any one firm in a year.

"It's very unfortunate but we were forced into giving in on this point... in the future such donations will be banned," Mr. Takemura said, referring to the government's plan to impose the ban five years down the road.

Battle underway to seize key Khmer Rouge base

PHNOM PENH (R) — The Cambodian army has started its long awaited campaign to capture the key Khmer Rouge base at northern Anlong Veng, but fighting so far is on a small scale, Defence Minister General Tea Banh said Sunday.

"This is not a big military operation... it's just troop movement to reconnoiter the geography," Gen. Tea Banh told Reuters.

He said government military activity around Anlong Veng had increased since the middle of January.

He declined to say how close government soldiers had approached to Anlong Veng. Anlong Veng lies 310 kilometres due northwest of Phnom Penh, and has served as the Khmer Rouge's key northern headquarters.

The English-language Cambodia times Sunday carried a front page photograph of government artillery shelling Anlong Veng. An accompanying story citing Defence Ministry sources said the government had ordered the capture of the base by April.

The newspaper said the government force was spearheaded by soldiers from 28th Division which has its headquarters in northwest Samrong about 65 kilometres west of Anlong Veng.

The military drive was supported by at least five tanks, truck-mounted multiple rocket launchers, 130mm artillery, five armoured personnel carriers and other heavy equipment, the newspaper said.

Phnom Penh-based defence analysts are divided on the government's prospects of

military success. Unless the government could guarantee secure lines of supply through to the base its chances of retaining Anlong Veng during the next wet season were poor, said one.

"If they (Cambodian army) can show the north of the country to be free of Khmer Rouge — then they've got a pretty big bargaining chip," said another who added the fighting was linked to political negotiations with the guerrillas.

The Khmer Rouge rejected participation in last May's U.N.-organised election and has continued to wage a low intensity guerrilla war to back its demands for an advisory role in government.

The Maoist-inspired rebels are held responsible for the deaths of one million Cambodians during their "killing fields" reign of terror in the 1970s.

Cambodia's coalition government has offered the insurgents cabinet positions but only if they first declare immediate ceasefire, open up their zones and demobilise their estimated 8,000-strong fighting force.

Both sides have agreed to establish a "technical working group" to discuss implementation of the plan but negotiations have remained deadlocked because the Khmer Rouge insist there be no preconditions.

Government troop strength in the region is estimated at no more than 2,500 soldiers. Defence analysts say the Khmer Rouge has 1,500 to 2,500 fighters defending the area around Anlong Veng.

Father breaks silence on missing Italian celebrity

NEW ORLEANS (AP) — The parents of a missing Italian celebrity offered a reward Saturday for her return and expressed the belief someone might be holding her as some kind of "spiritual slave."

Ylenia Carrisi, 23, the granddaughter of the late American movie star Tyrone Power, has been missing since New Year's Day. Romina Power said she and her husband, both Italian entertainers, would pay handsomely for their daughter's return. "I think she is being held by people against her will. I don't know. I can't explain why. It's just a feeling I have. I might be right. I might be wrong," said Romina Power, who flew here Thursday from Italy with her husband, Al Bano, to help police search for their daughter. "I don't mean just for information. Bring her to us. They will have a very large reward," the mother told a local television station. Since the first news of her disappearance Jan. 23, local police and increasing numbers of Italian news media have been searching intensely for Ylenia. Much of the search has centred in the city's French Quarter, a haven for musicians, tourists and street people. There also has been speculation Ylenia might have been the woman one man saw jump into the Mississippi River in an apparent suicide on Jan. 6. Police refused to validate that or any other speculation at this point.

"The New Orleans Police Department's (NOPD) investigation has been unable to confirm allegations that she is alive and that she is some kind of spiritual slave," said Sgt. Barry Fletcher, and NOPD spokesman. "Our investigation is continuing as a missing person's investigation period. Al Bano expressed the belief that one of his daughter's street musician friends, known to police only as Alexander, had mesmerised her daughter. He said he met Friday night with Alexander, who 'told lies.' 'He sold her to someone, that's my opinion,' Al Bano said."

Amish farmer's horses get mom to hospital in time

READING, Mich. (AP) — When horseless carriages failed her, expectant mother Josie Williams got a helping hand from an Amish neighbour and his trusty buggy. First the ambulance that picked her up Friday morning slid off an icy gravel road into a ditch. Then a passing four-wheel-drive truck stopped and tried to haul it out, but couldn't get a grip. Along came Elmer Eicher and his two-horse team, fresh from pulling another vehicle from a ditch. "He said he had the shoes sharpened up so they would bite into the ice," said Walt Zieser, director of Reading's Ambulance Service. "Once we got them hooked up, they walked it right out." The ambulance made it the rest of the way to Hillsdale Community Health Centre, about 80 miles (130 kms) southwest of Detroit, where Mrs. Williams delivered a healthy son, Matthew. Mother and child were in good condition, a nursing supervisor said. The Amish, descendants of 17th century Swiss Anabaptists, shun most motor-driven machinery and tools, using horse-drawn wagons for farm work and carriages for transportation.

Couple barred from taking baby up Andean peak

BUENOS AIRES (R) — An Argentine judge has barred a German couple from taking their two-year-old daughter up the highest mountain in the Americas, local media said Saturday. Ismael Jadur, a juvenile court judge in the Andean city of Mendoza, said he feared Johanna Roth could die of altitude sickness on the 22,800-foot (6,959-metre) Aconcagua. Mountain wardens spotted the family, from Eisenach in former east Germany, at 13,800 feet (4,200 metres), saying the parents smuggled Johanna through control points hidden in their equipment. Johanna had already been above 10,000 feet (3,000 metres) in Europe when she was just 22 months old, according to the girl's mother, Angelica, a midwife, who said she had studied the effects of altitude on babies in the Himalayas. Mother and daughter were waiting at a base camp while father Wigger continued the ascent, the reports said.

Mandela: Let De Klerk campaign in townships

RUSTENBURG, South Africa (Agencies) — African National Congress (ANC) leader Nelson Mandela urged his followers Sunday to allow President F.W. De Klerk to campaign freely in black townships for April's elections.

"I appeal to you... not to harass him or members of his organisation if they want to have meetings in our townships," he said.

"I don't want that party, when they lose the election, to say they were unable to put their view to the public because of the activities of the ANC," Mr. Mandela told about 6,000 people at a campaign rally in Rustenburg, in the Western Transvaal.

Several attempts by the National Party and the predominantly white Liberal Democratic Party to hold township election meetings

have been disrupted by angry youths.

The hostilities prevented Mr. De Klerk from touring two black townships in the Western Transvaal and Western Cape recently.

The ANC, which is expected to dominate the interim government after the April elections, complained Sunday that security forces in Bophuthatswana, a nominally independent homeland which has a border near Rustenburg, had erected roadblocks to prevent people attending the rally.

Many people in the crowd complained to Mr. Mandela of anti-ANC intimidation by Bophuthatswana leader Lucas Mangope.

Gen. Mangope belongs to the Freedom Alliance of white and black conservatives which opposes the interim constitution and transitional agenda adopted by the government,

ANC and other movements at multi-party democracy talks.

Alliance members, including the Zulu-based Inkatha Freedom Party and white supremacists, want regional self-rule.

Mr. Mandela, whose movement demands the reincorporation of homelands into post-apartheid South Africa, told supporters not to worry about Gen. Mangope because he would soon be out of power.

"I don't think we should worry much about what Mangope does, because he only has three months to lead Bophuthatswana," he said.

Mr. Mandela said the multi-party Transitional Executive Council (TEC) which was formed to level the playing field in the run-up to elections, had not been able to assert its authority over Bophuthatswana because of foot-dragging by Mr. De Klerk.

Taiwan opposition gains in polls

TAIPEI (R) — Taiwan's ruling Nationalist Party has won island-wide local government elections but the main opposition Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) and independent candidates made strong gains.

The Nationalists won 214 of 309 village and town mayoral posts at stake in Saturday's polls, which were marred by widespread allegations of vote-buying and campaign violence.

They won 260 mayoral posts in the last elections in 1990.

The DPP, which wants Taiwan to abandon its official goal of eventual reunification with China, more than tripled its number of mayoral seats to 21 from six, Provincial Election Commission spokesman Huang Teh-Wang said Sunday.

The Nationalists captured 516 of 853 city and county councillor seats, down from 587 out of 842 in 1990. The DPP saw its number of seats soar to 92 from 48.

In southern Taiwan, the ruling party lost its majority in four city and county councils — the first time it relinquished control over a city or county council since it lost the Chinese civil war and fled to Taiwan in 1949.

December, support for the republic had dropped to 44 per cent from 52 per cent earlier in the year, with support for the monarchy climbing from 38 to 48 per cent.

In a speech delivered an hour after the attack, Prince Charles described the republic debate here as "a sign of Australia's maturity and self-confidence."

But he added: "The point I want to make here, and for everyone to be perfectly clear about, is that this is something which only you — the Australian people — can decide."

Prince Charles was Sunday visiting the island State of Tasmania where he delivered a sermon on the subject of the nation and its spirituality in Hobart's Cathedral Church of St. David.

He flew to Perth in Western Australia later Sunday for the third leg of his four-state 12-day Australian tour.

The poll, conducted by Crutcher Market Research,

Clinton calls health system 'rigged'

WASHINGTON (R) — President Bill Clinton has said the nation's health insurance system is "rigged" against ordinary families and small businesses and said congressional critics do not understand the crisis most Americans face.

"This year we must make history by reforming the health care system and providing guaranteed private insurance to every American," Mr. Clinton said in his weekly radio address.

Acknowledging that "change is never easy," he criticised Republican-led attacks on his claim that the United States is in a health care crisis which requires sweeping reforms.

"You know, the only place where people say there's really no health care crisis is right here in Washington, where so many enjoy secure health benefits at reasonable cost, paid for by the taxpayers," Mr. Clinton said.

All members of Congress are provided with subsidised health care coverage that protects them and members of their immediate family.

Mr. Clinton, whose voice still sounded raspy following a sore throat that forced him to cancel public appearances for two days, said his package of proposals was necessary in order to provide universal protection.

An estimated 37 million Americans lack medical insurance, but under Mr. Clinton's plan no one could be denied coverage for any reason.

Under the administration plan all employers would be required to pay insurance premiums for their workers, who

would share 20 per cent of the cost.

"Let's face it, the health insurance system is rigged against ordinary families and small businesses. Insurance companies control it. They pick and choose whom they cover."

"They charge more if your business is too small," Mr. Clinton said. "They might not cover you at all or a member of your family or one of your employees if you have what they call a pre-existing condition."

Insurance companies often refuse to cover a worker diagnosed with a major health problem before being hired by the current employer. Because of the practice, many employees are unable to change jobs.

"We must make the health care system work for all the hard-working families in this country and put an end to the inefficiency, the fraud, and the abuse that has made our system the world's most expensive," the president said.

Mr. Clinton cited the case of Rick Tarnow of Longview, Texas, who left a large corporation to start his own firm and later found his son, who has cystic fibrosis, could not be insured.

He also cited Corrine Janetakis of Woburn, Massachusetts, who was partially paralysed 12 years ago by a stroke. Her husband has had trouble getting insurance because of her pre-existing condition.

"The Tarnow family, the Janetakis family and millions of other Americans live every day with the health care cri-

sis," Mr. Clinton said. "It's time we stopped denying there's a crisis and started fixing it."

In the Republican response, which was recorded before Mr. Clinton spoke, Senator Judd Gregg of New Hampshire summarised Mr. Clinton's approach to health care as one of: "Listen, we know what is best for you, the fact that you may not agree with us simply means that you are not smart enough to understand."

"It is an attitude that demands that the American people become dependents, that we rely for our sustenance and happiness on the self-congratulatory few who know better," said Sen. Gregg.

Mr. Clinton said that unless sweeping changes are approved by Congress this year, experts predict that "three of every 10 small businesses may be forced to stop covering their employees in the years ahead, because costs are going up so much faster than big business and government costs."

Senate Finance Committee Chairman Daniel Moinihan, a New York Democrat, predicted on Cable News Network's "Evans and Novak" programme that the panel would approve a bill with universal coverage within a few months. "The Republicans and Democrats are together on this," he said.

Health and Human Services Secretary Donna Shalala said on CNN's Newsmaker Saturday that health care reform was the administration's first priority, followed by welfare reform.

Ski champion's death shocks 'white circus'

By Alan Bannayan
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The Kingdom's most prominent soccer competition — the first division championship — is back in action Monday when Al Qadisiyah clash against Al Yarmouk in the opening match of the second leg of the tournament.

The upcoming 66 matches will provide most teams with a chance to enhance their standings in the quest for the title in the case of the current top five: Al Faisali, Al Ahli, Al Hussein, Al Ramtha and Al Wihdat. Meanwhile, teams like Al Baqaa, Sahab, Fuhais and Yarmouk will be contending with Al Arah, Al Jazireh and Al Qadisiyah to retain their places in the division and avoid the prospect of relegation facing the last four teams.

Titleholders Al Faisali topped the standings with 30 points at the end of the first leg. Al Ahli were second with 24 points and Al Hussein third with 23 points.

Al Faisali who have already clinched the Cup Winners' Cup and Jordan Cup titles of 1993 have won the first division title in seven of the past 13 seasons. They are the only unbeaten team so far, winning nine of their 11 matches and drawing only with Al Ahli and Al Hussein. They also have the best scoring record (25-5).

Al Ahli defied expectations this year by holding on to second place throughout most of the competition. They could have had higher overall points had they not been held to draws in three matches, 1-1 with Al Faisali and Al Wihdat, and 2-2 with Al Qadisiyah. They lost two matches 1-0 to Al Hussein and an unexpected 1-0 loss to newcomers Al Fuhais.

Al Hussein who finished second in 1990 and 1992 closely trail Al Ahli in third place after managing to hold Al Faisali and Al Wihdat to 0-0 and 1-1 draws and losing only to Al Ramtha 2-0.

Meanwhile, Al Ramtha were greatly affected by the absence of many key players due to injury or suspension. However, they still managed to finish fourth after losing to Al Faisali, Al Ahli and Al Wihdat.

Likewise Al Wihdat managed to hold to an acceptable standing for now despite the Jordan Soccer Federation's (JSF) decision to award Al Baqaa a 3-0 win over the former champion because of a technical irregularity.

Al Wihdat's only surprising result was a 2-0 loss to lowly Al Yarmouk, their other defeat was 1-0 to Al Faisali.

Ulrike Maier
Straight away something terrible had happened.

The mother of a four-year-old Melanie, who was nearly always waiting at the bottom of race hills. Maier was the first woman to be killed during a World Cup race.

Austrian men's team member Gernot Reinstadler was the last killed in 1991. Reinstadler crashed during training for a World Cup race at Wengen in Switzerland. Eight other male skiers have been killed in World Cup and top level skiing since 1959.

Since joining the Austrian team in 1982, Maier had become one of the top skiers of her generation. In recent press interviews she had expressed confidence but said she would retire at the end of the season.

She planned to marry her boyfriend, Hubert Schweighofer, the father of Melanie.

Meanwhile, Hubert Schweighofer, Maier's partner, accused organisers of security negligence and announced he would start legal proceedings against them.

In an interview with Italian T.V., Schweighofer said: "I don't understand why timing posts are only protected by bags of straw. You could use mattresses, nets..."

"I feel a great hatred against the International Skiing Federation security officials," added Schweighofer, father of Melanie. "They are not capable of telling the difference between what is dangerous and what is not."

But other racers were sure Maier had been the victim of a freak and tragic accident.

Maier, winner of the World Championship Giant Slalom title at vail, Colorado in 1991 and Saalbach, Austria two years later, was 32nd down the famed Kandahar slope.

Maier lost control of her right ski, smashed into the bank of snow and rebounded onto the piste, according to Flock. The impact was so great that Maier's helmet was torn from her head and she was left in a desperate state.

Doctors said the brutality of the fall cut the artery taking blood to Maier's brain and she had little hope of survival. She was given heart resuscitation treatment by Flock. She was also put on a breathing machine, but never regained consciousness.

Herwig Demtschar, coach to the Austrian women's team, said "I was on the scene of the accident and I could see

Al Subaihi wins Jordan a silver in Taekwondo

MANILA, Philippines (AP) — World Champion Kim Ke-Seong, struggling with a sprained left ankle, defeated Iranian Farzad Sarakhsh 6-3 Sunday, helping South Korea to dominate in 11th Asian taekwondo championships.

The South Koreans won 11 gold medals — seven in men's competition and four in women's. Taiwan's women finished the two-day competition in the Korean martial art with four golds and two silvers, the best performance among the 10 women's teams. The

GOREN BRIDGE

WITH OMAR SHARIF & YAMWAK HIRSH
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SUIT PREFERENCE OR ATTITUDE?

North-South vulnerable. South deals.

NORTH
43
6532
AJ10
AJ106

WEST
KQJ10764A982
99
6532
974

EAST
KQ
K964
852

SOUTH
6
AJ10764
Q87
KQ3

The bidding:
South West North East
1♥ 2♣ 4♥ 4♠
5♥ Pass Pass Pass

Opening lead: King of ♠

There is considerable difference of opinion about whether third-hand play to the first lead of the suit should be attitude, suit preference or count. Include us in the attitude camp. This deal will help explain why.

Note North's decision to jump to four hearts. The problem with bidding only three hearts is that partner might construe the simple raise

as a purely competitive effort, rather than an attempt to get to game and so pass many hands where four hearts would be a favorite. We don't fault South for the push to five hearts, even though four spades could be defeated three tricks, if the defenders stay away from hearts.

Cover the East and South hands and consider the problem from West's point of view. Suppose you use suit preference signals at trick one and East wants spades continued. If he plays a high spade, that indicates a diamond shift, not a spade continuation. Similarly, if you play count, a high spade would show an even number of cards and a low spade an odd number, but you sometimes can't be sure whether to continue the suit or switch.

Playing attitude, East would follow to trick one with the two, discouraging a spade continuation, but saying nothing about what shift is desired. Would you choose diamonds or clubs?

If declarer has a club loser, it's probably not going away, but a diamond loser could vanish on the clubs. Therefore, West should shift to a diamond and the contract goes down one in peace and quiet.

2nd leg of Jordan soccer championship kicks off today

By Alan Bannayan
Special to the Jordan Times

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Investigators gather new evidence in attack

PORTLAND, Ore. (AP) — Two weeks before the Winter Games begin, Tonya Harding's chances of skating for the U.S. team and avoiding criminal charges appeared bleak as investigators gathered new evidence in the attack on Nancy Kerrigan.

Hoever said he and Gilooly would make a public statement Monday or Tuesday, a strong indication that Gilooly planned to enter a plea then.

Investigators in Detroit reportedly have information that Harding asked for Kerrigan's hotel room number before the attack and made several calls to her bodyguard, Shawn Eckardt, the day of the assault.

The evidence is being gathered in an apparent attempt to corroborate statements made by Eckardt, who publicly has implicated Harding, and Gilooly, who reportedly has said she was in on the alleged plot.

Gilooly, Eckardt, confessed hit-man Shane Stant and Derrick Smith, who is accused of driving the getaway car, all are free on bail.

Meanwhile, the U.S. Figure Skating Association is strongly considering sending 13-year-old Michelle Kwan to the Lillehammer Games as an alternate, an unusual step.

"It's not completely confirmed," association spokeswoman Kristin Matta said. "Given the circumstances, it's definitely a possibility."

Kwan's representative issued a statement Saturday saying she continues to train but has not been notified she is going to Lillehammer.

If she was in Lillehammer, Kwan would be available if Harding was removed from the team at the last minute.

Sampras outclasses Martin to lift Australian Open title

MELBOURNE (AP) — It took Pete Sampras less than a month to achieve his ambition for 1994.

Sampras, who set himself the target of winning at least one Grand Slam title during the year, wore down Todd Martin with his power and accuracy Sunday, beating him 7-6 (7-4), 6-4, 6-4 in an all-American men's singles final at the Australian Open.

Sampras won the Australian title for the first time, adding it to the Wimbledon and U.S. Open titles he already holds.

"It's huge, the 22-year-old top seed said. "If I can maintain this play for the next five or six years, hopefully I can be considered one of the greatest of all time, and that's important to me."

With an impressive array of penetrating groundstrokes, Sampras took his record in Grand Slam finals to 4-1 and won his 23rd career title, strengthening his grasp on the No. 1 ranking.

Martin, 23, a close friend and golfing partner of Sampras, was playing in the first Grand Slam final of his career. The No. 9 seed matched Sampras for strength, but not for consistency.

"He was just too good, I guess," Martin said. "Of all the people, I'm really excited it's him that's doing so well. He's a really good guy."

While Sampras played well, he never reached the heights he scaled in his straight-set semifinal victory over two-time defending champion Jim Courier. He described that as "nearly a perfect match."

"It would have been tough to play that way again," he said. "Sometimes it clicks and sometimes it doesn't, but I'm happy with the way I played."

Sampras earned \$322,000 for his victory, which took 2 hours, 33 minutes, while Martin collected half that sum.

Sampras became only the third player to win Wimbledon, U.S. Open and Australian Open consecutively. The others were Don Budge in 1937-38 and Roy Emerson in 1964-65.

The centre-court crowd relished the hard-fought contest between two clean-cut players whose manners and demeanor are a throwback to a previous era.

Martin's powerful all-court game kept him in the contest in the tight first set as he hit winners off both sides — some of them whipping past a bemused Sampras.

He had six break points in the first set, but converted none of them.

"That was pretty significant," he said.

Martin couldn't keep producing winners, however, and made several volleying errors when he advanced to the net in the second and third sets. He had only a 53 per cent success rate at the net.

After he lost the first set in the tiebreaker, Martin's level of intensity appeared to drop and he was quickly in trouble in the second, in which he trailed 1-4.

"Winning the tiebreaker motivated Pete," said Martin. "Like most of the top players, he's a much better player when he's in front."

By the third set, Martin was reduced to a wry smile as Sampras repeatedly rocketed the ball past him.

The No. 1 seed led 5-1 before losing three straight games, but then served out for the match on his second attempt, including two aces. He had 13 aces in all.

"It wasn't my day, Martin said. "For the 13 days before, it felt like my day."

Martin's previous best performance in a Grand Slam was making the quarterfinals at Wimbledon last year, and he has won only one title during his career, but he has climbed from 87th to 12th in the ranking over the past 12 months.

Sampras improved his record against top 10 players to 3-0 in the first all-American final at the Australian Open since Johan Kriek beat Steve Denton at Kooyung in 1982.

The champion rarely showed emotion during the final, in line with his philosophy that winning is more important than being an entertainer.

"I was always taught and trained to concentrate on the ball, nothing else," he said in a recent interview.

"I played each point like it was the last point," he said Sunday. "I just told myself to fight as hard as I could."

Sampras, who came within two points of defeat against Russian Yevgeny Kafelnikov in the second round, paid tribute to his coach, Tim Gullikson, who he said has made a "huge impact" on his tennis.

The first set of the men's final lasted 63 minutes — six minutes longer than Saturday's women's final in which Steffi Graf attacked relentlessly from the first point and overwhelmed Arantxa Sanchez Vicario 6-0, 6-2.

It was the fastest Australian Open final in more than 30 years. The 24-year-old German won the fourth Australian Open title of her career, but her first since 1990.

Monica Seles, who is absent recovering after being stabbed in the shoulder, won in 1991-92-93.

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Zeroual named president; FIS dismisses appointment

ALGERIA (Agencies) — Algeria's backed leadership on Sunday appointed Zeroual as president, replacing an unelected five-man group that had ruled during the past two years of civil strife.

General Zeroual will keep the defence portfolio and head a country gripped by conflict between Muslim militants and the security forces. He will rule for a three-year period of "transition" aimed at taking the nation back to elections.

Diplomats say his greatest challenge will be to find some way to end the violence, either by a tougher military crackdown or a negotiated settlement with the fundamentalists.

Nearly 2,000 people have been killed since January 1992 when the authorities cancelled a general election which the fundamentalists were poised to win.

The new man, due to be sworn in Monday, is the fourth head of state in just over two years. He replaces the collective presidency, known as the High Council of State (HCEW), which was headed by Ali Kafi.

Gen. Zeroual was named by the High Security Council, responsible for taking key decisions in this economically-



Lamine Zeroual

battered country of 26 million people. Council members include the outgoing presidency, appeared headed for certain victory.

The FIS advance forced President Chadli Benjedid to step down in January 1992. The next day, the authorities cancelled the general election. Mr. Benjedid's successor Mohammed Boudiaf was assassinated in June 1992 and Mr. Kafi took over.

Despite an indefinite state of emergency, a night curfew on much of the country, and more than a score of executions,

there has been no let-up in the killings.

Diplomats said the former general comes to his task with vastly enhanced powers, both because he rules alone rather than by committee and because he has kept the defence portfolio.

An FIS spokesman dismissed the appointment of Gen. Zeroual, saying the government's days were numbered.

"The existence of the government in power has no justification and its days are numbered," said Rabah Kebir, president of the FIS executive in exile.

"After suffering a serious defeat in its so-called national dialogue conference... the junta is vainly trying through these theatrics (Zeroual's appointment) to seek legitimacy," Mr. Kebir said in a statement sent from his home in Germany.

Violence erupted after Algeria's first multi-party general election was scrapped in January 1992. The now-banned Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) had won over 80 per cent of the seats on a first round and

"The FIS recalls the only way out of the crisis... is a favourable reply to the de-

mands of the people for their choice of leaders and for the right to live under the protection of an Islamic state after the trial of those who shed the blood of innocents and destroyed the country's prosperity," the statement said.

Iran's official radio said the appointment of Gen. Zeroual would deepen the conflict with Islamic militants.

"This has placed a crisis-ridden country of Algeria on a path that is even more uncertain than before," Tehran Radio said in a commentary.

"The ruling High State Council which cancelled parliamentary elections two years ago and took power illegally has now violated Algeria's constitution once again," said the radio.

Algeria last year broke off diplomatic relations with Iran, accusing it of supporting the Muslim fundamentalists.

The radio said some military units had joined a newly formed Islamic liberation army in Algeria.

"With a number of units from the army joining the Islamic liberation army the opposition has achieved a new situation in the political balance of the country. The government cannot ignore this fundamental development," it said.



DAVOS TALKS: Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat (left) and Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres (right) with their aides prior to their talks Sunday in Davos, Switzerland (see page 1)

Zhirinovskiy: Russia will move south—by invitation

BLED, Slovenia (R) — Russian troops will be patrolling on the shores of the Indian Ocean within 10 years, nationalist politician Vladimir Zhirinovskiy says.

"Russia has a historic mission to the south," Mr. Zhirinovskiy, who left the Slovenian town of Bled near the Austrian border early on Sunday for Belgrade, said in an interview.

But the Russian advance would be only by invitation to keep the peace and to halt a series of regional wars, he added.

The interview took place at the weekend in the steamy surroundings of a sauna bath in the four-star hotel where Mr. Zhirinovskiy was staying before heading for Serbia via Hungary.

In Russia's parliamentary election last month, Mr. Zhirinovskiy's Liberal Democratic Party won nearly a quarter of the national vote, making it the most popular party in Russia.

Before the election, Mr. Zhirinovskiy published his autobiography, "The Last Play for the South," which predicted that Russian troops would fight their way south

wards in a "final campaign" through Afghanistan, Iran and Turkey, until their soldiers could wash their boots in the Indian Ocean.

Istanbul would also fall under Russian control, fulfilling a traditional dream of the Tsars.

But, in the interview, Mr. Zhirinovskiy softened his forecast, saying the submission of Russia's southern neighbours to Moscow would be entirely voluntary.

"They will all fight among themselves and we will come in when they invite us," he said. "It will be like a woman saying 'come here, I want you.' There will be no question of grabbing her and tearing her knickers off. That will be the moment when Russian soldiers will reach the shores of the Indian Ocean."

Mr. Zhirinovskiy said he planned to visit Turkey at the invitation of a trading company and a newspaper in mid-February.

A fluent Turkish speaker, he wrote in his book that it would be no great loss for the world "if the whole Turkish nation

were to perish — although I do not want that to happen."

In his interview, Mr. Zhirinovskiy predicted Turkey would intervene in the Caucasus to defend Azerbaijan against Armenia.

"I do not wish to see the Turks any harm, but if they interfere in the Caucasus then the Armenians will arm the Kurds and there are 30 million of them," he said.

"Every day the Turks are bombing Kurdish villages and you in the West don't say this is fascism, you say it's democracy. When I ask people to stop killing Russians you in the West call me a fascist."

Mr. Zhirinovskiy proposed that Muslim peoples in former Soviet republics and further south should return to strict Islamic law rather than trying to maintain their own independent states.

"Every Muslim is supposed to complete the Hajj pilgrimage to Mecca on foot from wherever he lives. Do they do that? No, they fly on aeroplanes made by Russian engineers," he said.

Aideed plans to form interim government

KAMPALA (Agencies) — The Somali faction headed by warlord Mohammed Farah Aideed said Sunday it planned to set up an interim government in Somalia before the end of March, in a veiled ultimatum to the U.N. peacekeeping force there to leave.

Spokesman for Gen. Aideed's Somali National Alliance (SNA) Mohammed Hassan Awale who accompanied the faction leader to Uganda said the United Nations peacekeeping force in Somalia (UNOSOM) had outlived its usefulness in the war-torn country now that famine had ended.

"After the creation of an authority in (the capital) Mogadishu and our target is March, disarmament will start and if we need help we shall ask African leaders to provide a peacekeeping force," said Mr. Awale, Aideed's advisor on international affairs.

Gen. Aideed left the Ugandan capital Sunday after a four-day visit during which he had talks with President Yoweri Museveni.

The warlord has repeatedly called for UNOSOM's departure accusing the force of killing thousands of Somalis.

Mr. Awale said Gen. Aideed had "fruitful discussions with President Museveni on the situation in Somalia and the progress towards peace amongst the fighting factions."

The meeting took place on Saturday.

Gen. Aideed is going back

to the Kenyan capital, Nairobi, to continue peace negotiations with other Somalia factions, Mr. Awale said.

He is expected to meet representatives from the Somali Salvation Democratic Front, the Somalia National Democratic Union and the Somali National Front, before returning to Mogadishu within the next couple of days," Mr. Awale said.

Gen. Aideed travelled to Uganda from Nairobi on Thursday.

U.S. troops shipped out

Some 220 U.S. troops were shipped out of Mogadishu Sunday to launch a massive sea-borne evacuation of Washington's remaining U.N. peacekeeping contingent after plans for an airlift were scrapped for fear of drawing anti-aircraft fire.

The troops, members of infantry and engineer companies, set off on board the 41-year-old Greek ferry "Mediterranean Sky" on a one-and-a-half day sea voyage to the Kenyan port of Mombasa. From there they will fly back to their base in Fort Stewart, Georgia.

Captain Bob Costello, who inspected the vessel Saturday, said the sea transport was an "extra precaution decided when we received information that anti-aircraft missiles could be fired at the U.S. forces" in the event of an airlift.

Turkey offers to visit Iran to investigate air strike

TEHRAN (AFP) — Ankara has offered to send a team here to investigate reports that a Turkish air strike on northern Iraq killed nine people and wounded 19 others in Iranian border villages.

The villages in northwestern Azerbaijan province were hit by "several rockets and bombs" after Turkish warplanes attacked a Kurdish Labour Party (PKK) base in northern Iraq Friday, the official Iranian media said Saturday.

There was no word Sunday on whether Iran would agree to receive an investigating team from Turkey. Tehran expressed deep concern about the attack and newspapers close to hardliners condemned it as "adventurism."

Turkish Foreign Minister Hikmet Cetin told his Iranian counterpart Ali Akbar Velayati Saturday Turkey had not intended any hostile act against its neighbour and that it was an accident, the Iranian news agency IRNA reported.

In a telephone call from Davos, Switzerland, Mr. Cetin said Ankara would send a team to Iran to conduct a joint investigation, would accept its findings, and was prepared to compensate Iran, according to IRNA.

The Turkish foreign ministry in Ankara said Saturday that the team would include Turkish officers.

It added that "all measures were taken" to avoid civilian casualties and Iranian authorities were "informed in advance" about the goal of the air strike.

A Turkish military spokesman said Friday it was the air force's biggest raid on the PKK's positions in Zaleh, northern Iraq — believed to be home to 1,600 guerrillas — in the past 10 years and that more than 50 aircraft took part.

Tehran expressed "deep concern" about the situation and demanded an explanation.

Meanwhile two radical newspapers here denounced the raid as "adventurism."

The daily Jomhuri Islami, close to the Islamic hardliners, said it doubted Turkey's "good intentions," adding that excuses provided by the Turkish leaders were "inadmissible."

It called on Ankara to apologise to the Iranian nation and government and make sure "such criminal and repugnant facts would not occur again."

Salman newspaper condemned the "savage attacks" on northern Iraq and Iranian villages and called them a "dangerous game" initiated by the Turkish leaders.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Israel sees 'unprecedented deterrent'

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Israel will acquire an unprecedented deterrent force by buying some 20 American F-15E fighter-bombers, Israel's air force commander General Herzl Bodinger told Sunday's Haaretz newspaper. Gen. Bodinger said the F-15E, codenamed "Strike Eagle," was "an exceptional plane, whose capacities match its high cost, and which proved itself during the Gulf war" to drive Iraqi forces from Kuwait in 1991. It can carry a large quantity of weapons up to 1,600 kilometres from Israel's borders. "This plane increases considerably the air force's capacities and provides us with a strategic deterrent force that we did not have until now," Gen. Bodinger told the paper. Congressional officials said Thursday the U.S. administration had given the go-ahead on a McDonnell-Douglas Corp. contract to sell to Israel 20 F-15E warplanes. The estimated \$2 billion contract includes an option for Israel to buy five more F-15Es at a later date, according to the officials.

'Japan could build N-bomb quickly'

LONDON (AFP) — Japan possesses all it needs to build a nuclear bomb "very quickly" to counter any nuclear threat by North Korea, according to a secret British Defence Ministry report cited by the Sunday Times. "Japan has acquired all the parts necessary for a nuclear weapon and may even have built a bomb which requires only enriched plutonium for completion," the Sunday Times quoted the report as saying. According to the report — sent last month to the joint intelligence committee, which advises Prime Minister John Major and his cabinet — there is no evidence that Japan has decided to proceed with a nuclear bomb programme or that it has violated its commitments to the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). The British Defence Ministry refused to comment on the matter. The Sunday Times quoted the ministry as saying in its report that Japan could be forced to abandon its non-nuclear stance if the crisis over North Korea's nuclear programme is not resolved.

Blast inside Indian cinema injures 18

NEW DELHI (AFP) — At least 18 people were injured Sunday when a bomb exploded inside a packed cinema in the Indian capital minutes after the matinee show ended, triggering a stampede, police said. The bomb, placed underneath a seat in the rear gallery of the Odeon Cinema in downtown Delhi, went off after about 100 of the more than 850 viewers had come out. "There was a loud explosion and a lot of smoke," said theatre employee Jekhan Singh. "There was complete panic. People began screaming and running." Eighteen people were injured, some in the blast and some after running into the glass doors of the main exit in a panic-driven stampede triggered by the explosion, which created a small crater in the floor. The victims were admitted to hospital. No one was seriously injured, police said.

Gunmen wound Egyptian policeman

CAIRO (R) — Unidentified gunmen shot and seriously wounded a policeman on his way to work in the south Egyptian province of Minya on Sunday, security sources said. The gunman opened fire on Mohammed Darwish Osman in the town of Mallawi, 295 kilometres south of Cairo, hitting him in the chest and legs, the sources said. The assailants escaped. Security officials said Osman was taken to hospital but no further news of his condition was available. Policemen are targets of militants fighting to overthrow the Egyptian government and replace it with an Islamic state but most security personnel fatalities have been in Assiut, the province just south of Minya. Suspected militants ambushed the car of a brigadier in Assiut on Thursday, killing his driver and bodyguard. At least 279 people have been killed and 670 wounded in militant-related violence in Egypt since 1992.

Blast at pro-Kurdish office causes damage

ANKARA (AP) — An explosion at the pro-Kurdish Democracy Party office early Sunday caused heavy damage, Anatolia news agency said. No injuries were reported. There were no immediate claims of responsibility for the attack which occurred in the outskirts of Ankara. On Jan. 20 another office of the party also in Ankara was bombed. One person was injured in that attack. The Democracy Party, which has 17 members in the 450-member parliament, allegedly has links to the outlawed Kurdish Labour Party (PKK). The PKK is waging a separatist guerrilla war in southeastern Turkey. Many of the Democracy Party deputies are facing prosecution on charges of separatism.

IRA plants more bombs

LONDON (Agencies) — A firebomb detonated in a London shop and started a fire while police defused another suspected explosion device, police said Sunday.

The incendiary, hidden among towels in a bedding shop, did not hurt any of the officers when it exploded Saturday night. Scotland Yard said in a statement.

Although there was no immediate claim of responsibility, the Irish Republican Army (IRA) frequently uses cassette-timed firebombs to cause economic damage and inconvenience in Britain, particularly London. The outlawed group has been waging a 22-year violent campaign against British rule in Ireland.

Saturday's attack follows similar IRA firebombings in the same stretch of Oxford Street, London's most popular shopping area.

In one of the worst attacks, Thursday, firebombs caused hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of damage to three stores. Police found another device in an infant's accessories store Friday and defused it.

The IRA considers the easily concealed, homemade devices an effective way to maintain political pressure on Britain without risking civilian fatalities.

Last month of British and Irish governments offered to negotiate with Sinn Fein, the IRA's legal political ally, if the IRA first renounced violence.

Sinn Fein and IRA leaders are holding internal discussions on the offer.

Authorities in Dublin, the Irish capital, earlier Saturday ordered shopkeepers to be on alert for suspected firebombs after two suspect devices were discovered in stores off O'Connell Street, the city's major thoroughfare.

So-called "loyalist" paramilitaries based in northern Ireland's pro-British Protestant community have begun developing IRA-style firebombs to attack Irish targets. The outlawed Ulster Defence Association claimed responsibility last week for firebombs that badly damaged two shops in the border town of Dundalk, about 100 kilometres.

U.N. plans broad range of Iraq monitoring measures

MANAMA (AP) — U.N. experts are deploying a broad range of measures to ensure Baghdad does not acquire or build long-range missiles of the type it fired at Saudi Arabia and Israel during the Gulf war, a Russian official said Sunday.

"It's a rather big machinery that we're setting up and it's unprecedented... to establish an international U.N. machinery under Security Council auspices and mechanisms," said Nikita Smidovich, talking to reporters on his return from Iraq.

Mr. Smidovich, who headed a team of 16 experts, discussed with the Iraqis where television cameras and other monitoring sensors would be placed and how often factories would be inspected.

They returned to their regional base in Bahrain Saturday after a week-long visit to Iraq to develop the monitoring plan that is designed to prevent Iraq using its factories to develop missiles beyond the range of 150 kilometres.

Such Scud-type missiles along with nuclear, chemical and biological weapons were prohibited under the Gulf war ceasefire.

A team of chemical weapons experts led by German Horst Reeps is heading to Baghdad on Tuesday to work on developing a monitoring plan to guarantee Iraq does not try to revive chemical and biological weapons programmes.

Nuclear inspectors of the Vienna-based International Atomic Energy Agency have been doing the same in the field of prohibited nuclear weapons.

"But in missiles, you don't even have a legal precedent, unlike the chemical area where you have a chemical weapons convention and the nuclear where you have a Non-Proliferation Treaty," said Mr. Smidovich.

In the case of Iraq, there was a need to watch "the whole industrial base" to stop the manufacture of parts for long-range missiles, he said.

Uzbekistan accused of role in Afghan fighting

KABUL (Agencies) — Afghanistan's northern neighbour, the former Soviet Republic of Uzbekistan, is accused of aiding a rebel faction fighting to overthrow President Burhanuddin Rabbani, according to an official spokesman in Kabul Sunday.

"We have clear-cut evidence about direct interference by Uzbekistan in the Kabul fighting," presidential spokesman Abdul Aziz Morad told AFP.

Mr. Morad said the former communist militia warlord, Uzbek General Abdul Rashid Dostum, who launched a failed coup attempt in the capital on New Year's Day, had received much military support for the one-month long Kabul factional fighting.

He said representatives of Gen. Dostum met with government officials in the Uzbek capital, Tashkent in order to help plan the coup attempt in Kabul.

"Many facilities, both military and economic, have been put at Dostum's disposal by

Uzbekistan," Mr. Morad said. He accused Uzbekistan of not only supplying Gen. Dostum with jets, aircraft spare-parts and the construction of a military airstrip, but also of launching air-raids over Kabul and other targets from inside Uzbekistan itself.

Although Mr. Morad said it was not clear if the Uzbek interference in Afghanistan originated from the highest official level, he nevertheless demanded that a joint Afghan-Uzbek commission be appointed to investigate the charges.

The rumble of anti-aircraft fire over the capital followed three raids on Kabul by Dostum jets before midday Sunday, with bombs exploding at the foot of the strategic "Television Mountain," which houses a lot of heavy artillery.

But Mr. Rabbani's forces said their aircraft retaliated and shot down two of Gen. Dostum's Soviet-built SU-22 fighters Sunday morning outside the beleaguered capital.

Woman acquitted in slaying of violent husband

TURIN, Italy (AP) — A woman who stabbed her husband to death in front of their three children is free after a prosecutor dropped the case, saying it was fitting for the man's violent life to end "on the point of a knife." The case of Regina Micheletta Giot and her apparent suffering at the hands of her drug-addicted husband drew comparisons with Lorena Bobbitt, the American woman acquitted Jan. 21 despite cutting off her husband's penis. Mrs. Giot's husband, Cismo Canon, was described in court as a malicious drug addict who often beat his wife during their 13-year marriage and sometimes turned on their children. During a violent outburst by Mr. Canon on Jan. 16, Mrs. Giot stabbed him in the stomach, according to police. Mr. Canon died on the way to the hospital on the outskirts of this northern Italian city. Mrs. Giot was freed late Friday, but said she would not return to the home she shared with Mr. Canon. She spent Saturday with relatives. "Canon was aggressive and violent — characteristics well known to those such as his wife, who had to suffer the consequences," said prosecutor Andrea Bascheri Friday. "He attacked and beat his wife... And his life ended on the point of a knife."

California to pay \$4.1m to blind driver's victims

SANTA ANA, California (AFP) — A jury found the state of California liable for issuing a driver's license to a legally blind man and ordered the state to pay \$4.1 million to three people he ran down in a crosswalk. The Superior Court jury reached a verdict Friday in a lawsuit against the Department of Motor Vehicles for the accident caused by George Lizaralde, who is legally blind. The jury already had found the department negligent for giving Mr. Lizaralde a driver's license. The 31-year-old man unsuccessfully applied for a license three times before receiving it in 1985 even though he flunked the vision test. The license was renewed in 1990. Deborah Mohr, 32, one of the victims in the August 1991 accident, suffered brain damage and walks with a cane. She was awarded \$3.5 million. "I would give up every penny to be able to walk normal again, to have my memory back again, and to have things back to normal," she said. The department said it would appeal the award.

End of the affair for Prince Charles

LONDON (R) — Prince Charles has ended his affair with an army officer's wife in order to regain the public esteem lost through the breakup of his marriage to Princess Diana, British newspapers reported Sunday. The heir to the throne's relationship with Camilla Parker-Bowles was commonly cited as a major cause of the royal marriage split. "It's over with Camilla," proclaimed the tabloid News of the World. "The prince and his married confidante have made a pact not to see or even speak to each other." It quoted a "friend" of the prince's as saying Mrs. Bowles was eager to preserve Prince Charles' chances to succeed his mother, Queen Elizabeth. "Both the prince and Camilla know how important this year is to him," it said. A poll released earlier this month showed that Prince Charles' popularity had sunk to all-time lows, with most Britons preferring Princess Diana. Prince Charles won an approval rating of only 17 per cent while Princess Diana had 47 per cent — an indication that she had kept the sympathy of the public since the couple's bitter separation 13 months ago. Ten years ago, Prince Charles was the most popular member of the royal family, with a 50 per cent confidence vote. But then came rumours of the adulterous affair with Mrs. Bowles, which have not been denied. They climaxed with the publication of the "camillagate" tapes, alleged to have been an intimate 1989 bed-time conversation between Prince Charles and Mrs. Bowles.